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The President goes on trial

US faces political paralysis

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE trial to determine whether William Jefferson Clinton becomes the first President in American history to be removed from office by the Senate opened yesterday to solemn ceremonies not witnessed for 130 years.

But behind the stately scenes prescribed by the Constitution, party leaders' attempts to thrash out the rules of a trial with only one precedent remained in chaos. An appalled nation began last night to contemplate the prospect that the trial could spin into an uncontrollable partisan blood-bath, crippling Republicans as well as their presidential target, and paralysing the nation's politics.

The Senate was voting last night on procedures. The trial will open on Thursday and Republican senators said it could be over by February 12.

In a dark room with four gold bands on each arm, Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist took his seat in the centre of the Senate rostrum to begin the trial, calling each of the 100 senators by name to swear the oath.

Earlier, a procession of 13 Republican managers of the House of Representatives crossed Capitol Hill to the Senate to deliver the two articles of impeachment, led by the white-haired, bulky, stooping figure of Henry Hyde, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. In dark suits and white shirts, they formed a solemn semi-circle in the well of the Senate floor as Mr Hyde slowly read the two articles.

Mr Clinton is charged with perjury in giving evidence about his affair with Monica Lewinsky in the Paula Jones civil trial and in the grand jury inquiry led by Kenneth Starr. He is also accused of bringing the office of the presidency into disrepute.

Strom Thurmond, 96, the oldest senator and the longest serving in US history, was given the honour of chairing the initial formalities. Banging the gavel repeatedly, in a quavering Southern accent he ordered an excited and restless Senate to "take your seats or go to the cloakroom".

This is a trial like no other. It has 100 jurors, who can over-ride their judge with a majority vote on any point. It will be held in front of the world's television cameras, which will also eagerly tap the mood of any juror leaving the Senate floor. The rules, by which it will be conducted are also in the hands of the jurors, and yesterday remained the focus of bitter fighting.

In one of the most perilous political gambles in Washington for years, Republican leaders face an "all or nothing" choice. They could hold a micro-trial of a few weeks, with no witnesses, leading to a quick vote. Judging by party whips' feelings, that would leave Mr Clinton in office, free of the Lewinsky albatross.

But a full-scale trial, complete with witnesses, may trigger an all-out war, unpredictable and uncontrollable. That could prove one of the greatest own-goals in American political history, alienating the public, jeopardising the party's control of the House and Senate in 2000, and scuppering its chances of putting a Republican in the White House.

The President's legal army yesterday rode rapidly to exploit that fear. Lawyers warned that "if the Senate called a single witness, 'all bets are off'. They swore to seek a delay in the start of the trial of up to seven months to take depositions. They would challenge the constitutionality of the process on every conceivable point, and call an unknown number of their own witnesses.

Monica Lewinsky is one of the greatest wild cards; she could be called as a witness by either side, and could damage either. In the glare of five television cameras, the Senate would have to question her on the details at the heart of the

perjury charge: whether the President directly touched her breasts and genitals, as she claims, contradicting his claim that he never had sexual relations with her.

The tactical quandary has plunged the normally sedate Senate into turmoil. George Washington, the first American President, called the Senate the saucer into which legislative acts were poured to cool, diffusing the boiling heat of

the popular passions in the House. But this week, the obstreperous House has revelled in a serene smugness. Having pulled the pin of the impeachment grenade, Republican House members have tossed it

onto the Senate floor, the President was sitting down for his weekly lunch with Vice-President Al Gore.

The White House was struggling yesterday to keep up a facade of business as usual. As the Chief Justice was walking



Members of the House of Representatives arriving at the Senate chamber yesterday to deliver the impeachment resolution against President Clinton

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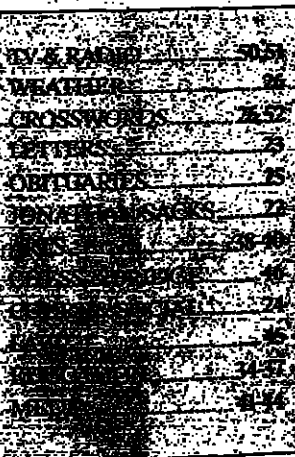
onto the Senate floor, the President was sitting down for his weekly lunch with Vice-President Al Gore.

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Cancer gene identified

At least half of all cancers could become preventable as a result of the discovery of a gene that plays a vital role in the development of many forms of the disease.

When mutated, the gene not only loses the ability to kill cancer-forming cells but also speeds up their growth. The mutated gene has been linked to lung, breast and colon cancer. Now scientists hope to develop drugs to stop it functioning. Page 5



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Building society puts questions to Mandelson

BY CAROLINE MERRELL AND MARK HENDERSON

PETER MANDELSON has been questioned by building society investigators as officials consider reporting him to police over allegations about his mortgage application.

The former Trade and Industry Secretary was interviewed to allow him to put his case to the Britannia Building Society's inquiry. A director is expected to decide today whether to hand the case to the police for possible prosecution.

The investigation by an "enforcement team" followed claims that Mr Mandelson misled the society when applying for the £150,000 mortgage on his home in Notting Hill, London, by failing to disclose the £370,000 loan from Geoffrey Robinson which eventually cost both men their jobs.

The man's findings, which are normally final, have been referred to board level. Further action is usually taken only when the society has suffered financial loss. Any police investigation would probably be handled by Staffordshire Police, the local force at Britannia's headquarters.

Mr Mandelson will today begin his official rehabilitation by holding talks for the Government with the man who used to be his German ministerial counterpart, Bodo Hombach, to examine common "third way" ground.

Mandelson evidence, page 11

Leading article, page 23

nia's Leek headquarters, and a decision to press charges would be made with the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mortgage specialists said yesterday that if Mr Mandelson had declared the £370,000 loan on his form, then it would have been highly unlikely that the society would have granted him the mortgage, as the loans in total then appeared to far outstrip his ability to make repayments on his salary of £40,000 in 1996.

The Britannia said it had referred only a handful of cases to the police. It said if it found a material discrepancy on a borrower's application form, then it would take up the matter with the borrower.

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Mandelson evidence, page 11

Leading article, page 23

Bank rate cut for fourth time in a row

BY IAN MURRAY AND RUSSELL JENKINS

HOMEOWNERS were given a boost yesterday as the Bank of England cut interest rates in its battle to head off recession (see page 27).

The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee cut base rates by a quarter point to 6 per cent — the fourth cut in successive months, which took rates back to where they were when Labour took office — and big mortgage lenders immediately followed suit.

The Nationwide said that with rates clearly on a downward trend, there would be more good news to come. However, the Cheltenham & Gloucester, which has five times as many savers as borrowers, said that it would not be able to carry on cutting its rates because while borrowers were doing "cartwheels of ecstasy", savers were left in despair.

Despite such misgivings, yesterday's move was broadly welcomed by business and industry. The MPC said that it had decided to cut rates again in view of evidence that the economy was slowing down and that the risks of inflationary wage demands were abating. Page 27

Bank rate cut, page 27

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Gladiator's baby dies in outbreak of meningitis

BY IAN MURRAY AND RUSSELL JENKINS

THE eight-month-old daughter of the former Olympic athlete, Judy Simpson, has died of meningitis.

Joan Mary Simpson is one of more than a dozen young children to have died in the current outbreak of the illness, which is one of the most severe in recent years.

Unofficial figures show that at least 25 people have died from the disease since Christmas, already more than in the same period last year, when the number of cases reported was the highest for fifty years.

After an epidemic just after the Second World War, cases fell annually until 1994, when numbers started to rise again. In 1997, 2,266 cases were notified, 243 of whom died. In the first 50 weeks of last year 1,929 cases were notified.

Julia Warren, of the National Meningitis Trust, said its helpline had been swamped with hundreds of people seeking advice over the past four days. "I have never known us to be so busy," she said.

Mrs Simpson, a Commonwealth gold medalist who became a television star after her husband Robin was too distressed to talk about their baby's death yesterday. A private funeral will take place in Birmingham next week.

Up to 3,000 youngsters in Poynton, Cheshire, are to be vaccinated against meningitis after a third confirmed case of a different form of the disease, which killed a local teenager.

Simpson: too distressed to talk of daughter's death

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'All bets off' in full-scale war

THE White House strategy for a full-scale trial of President Clinton is simple: "all bets are off," said its spokesman, Joe Lockhart. The result would be a long, complicated slog through a legal quagmire.

With little prospect of Mr Clinton being convicted by the requisite two thirds of the Senate, the White House had been hoping for a quick trial that would be abandoned after a test vote and lead to nothing more serious than a firm rebuke in the form of a censure.

But his lawyers have been proceeding on the basis that there might be a full-scale trial. As that appeared to be the spectacle in store last night, they were determined to mount a full defence.

There is no whit of half-measures. "Once you get into a trial, it's a war," said Alan Baron, a prosecutor who has been involved in the impeachment trials of lesser officials.

The tactics of Mr Clinton's legal team, including his old friend and personal attorney David Kendall and his White House lawyers Charles Ruff and Gregory Craig, seem likely to involve every weapon they can get their hands on.

Firstly, the constitutional basis of the trial may be challenged because the Articles of Impeachment were passed by the last Congress. The new one, the 106th, containing an increased number of Democrats, was sworn in this week.

Then, if the prosecution is calling witnesses, the defence will insist on drawing up its own list, to help to pick holes in accusations that Mr Clinton lied under oath about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky and obstructed justice in trying to cover it up.

There could follow a very lengthy process of taking depo-



White House risks hidden perils in slog through legal quagmire, writes Damian Whitworth in Washington

THE DEFENCE

sitions from the witnesses and a period of discovery in which both sides disclose the evidence they intend to present.

Suddenly, the proceedings could take months even before Ms Lewinsky or Mr Clinton's secretary, Betty Currie, or his friend, Vernon Jordan, are summoned to the chamber of the Senate. If and when they do arrive, the cross-examination could be drawn-out, and extraordinary.

Mr Clinton has disputed Ms Lewinsky's account of their intimate relationship. Just how his lawyers approach her will be fascinating.

The White House was clearly trying to raise alarm by painting a picture of a trial stretching out interminably yesterday. But it is certain that a full trial could last many months. Less certain is who would be most damaged — the Republicans, who have pushed for the trial in the face of public opposition and might be hammered in the 2000 elections — or Mr Clinton. He could still be mortally wounded by any new discoveries emerging during the case.

The White House made a last-minute bid yesterday to keep witnesses and new evidence out of the trial by saying it would agree to base its defence solely on the case handed over by the House of Representatives.

"We're willing to have the case tried based on that [House] record," said Mr Lockhart. "If the process becomes wide open and they seek to go beyond the record and they seek to call witnesses, you will then get into a period where there will be motions, there will presumably be discovery and I can't tell you how long that process will take."

Mr Lockhart said that if the proposal were accepted, the White House would still contest the sex and cover-up allegations of prosecutors from the House of Representatives, based on the referral of the independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr. But the White House would not call witnesses to test their credibility.

If a full trial goes ahead it is unlikely that Mr Clinton will take the stand, but it cannot be ruled out completely. The only certainty about the whole year-long saga has been its ability to surprise.



Chief Justice William Rehnquist swore in the 100 Senate jurors in yesterday's proceedings

Republicans face their biggest gamble for decades

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

FOR a brief hour from 1pm yesterday, Republican senators assembled for the formal opening ceremony of the trial of President Clinton, before resuming their frantic attempts to thrash out its rules.

The 55 Republicans in the 100-strong Senate face one of the biggest political gambles that Washington has seen for decades.

If they curtail the trial to a mere few weeks, followed by a quick vote, it is a near-certainty that Bill Clinton

THE PROSECUTION

will stay in office until his term ends in 2000.

But if they push for a full trial and insist on calling witnesses, "all bets are off", in the warning words of the White House. They would have started not just an unknown and cumbersome legal process, but a war which could sprawl over the rest of the millennium. It would be a fight to the death, which could see Mr Clinton become the first President to be impeached and thrown out of office.

But it could also backfire on Republicans, paralysing the country's legislation for another year, turning the public against them, and squandering the party's control of the House and Senate in the 2000 elections, as well as the chance of putting a Republican into the White House.

At worst, in the eyes of Mr Clinton's critics, he might eventually escape without even a censure or fine, at least partially vindicated by the Republicans' failure to muster a two-thirds majority of the Senate against him after such a bloody battle.

The tactical dilemma has thrown

the spotlight on Senate Majority Leader, Trent Lott of Mississippi, best known as a passionate conservative and a fierce critic of Mr Clinton, but who is now trying to broker a deal within his own party to back a short trial.

Yesterday it appeared that Mr Lott was making headway, with more conciliatory tones towards the notion of a short trial coming from the conservative wing.

But the crucial question of whether to call witnesses remains the sticking point, which could scupper his attempts at mediation.

Many Republicans were insisting yesterday that if this procedure is to be a proper trial, the Senate ought to call witnesses.

Those could include Mr Clinton himself, as well as Monica Lewinsky, Mr Clinton's secretary Betty Currie, and Mr Clinton's longtime friend and adviser Vernon Jordan.

On a field of such constitutional muddiness, the threats of alarmists on both sides cannot be dismissed: if war breaks out, it could last for much of the rest of the century.

Letters, page 23

Johnson 'was not fit for the doghouse'

BY TIM HAMES

FOR all the salacious material and obvious difficulty in determining procedure, the Senate trial of Bill Clinton promises to be a positively dignified affair compared with the only other attempt to oust a President, the trial of Andrew Johnson in 1868.

That Senate melodrama came after a period of exceptionally bitter conflict between the President and Congress. Johnson was an utterly accidental occupant of the White House. A southern Democrat who nonetheless supported the Union in the Civil War, he had become Vice-President under the Republican Abraham Lincoln as part of a unity ticket for the election of 1864.

Lincoln's assassination elevated him to the presidency. His qualifications for high office were extremely modest. A low-born and uncouth figure, illiterate until his wife taught him to write, and with a passion for alcohol that matched Bill Clinton's enthusiasm for sex, he was as one contemporary commentator put it, "not fit for the doghouse, never mind the White House".

He also favoured an amicable settlement with the southern states and had little enthusiasm for allowing the newly freed slaves political power. That was precisely the opposite combination of policies to those held by the Republican majority in Congress.

On three occasions in less than six months they tried to impeach him. The first time their efforts fell short by one vote in the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee. The second attempt, four months later, passed in the committee but failed on the House floor.

The third time, however, after Johnson ignored the Tenure of Office Act, 1867, and improperly dismissed his Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, the House completed the whole process of impeachment in little more than 48 hours.

It then fell to the Senate to determine Johnson's future. It



Johnson: passion for alcohol

handled matters with a little more decorum and rather less haste than the House of Representatives. It was still, though, something less than a model of judicial behaviour.

After a 74-day trial, presided over by a shamelessly biased Chief Justice who favoured keeping Johnson because he thought this might win him, the Chief Justice, the Democratic Party nomination for President, the Senate pronounced its opinion. Johnson was saved by a single vote.

ARTICLES OF IMPEACHMENT

Accusations that led to Senate trial

TWO articles of impeachment were passed by the House of Representatives last month against President Clinton, and led to his trial in the Senate. Articles II and IV were rejected. Resolution impeaching William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors. Resolved, that William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States, is impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the United States Senate: Articles of impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States of America in the name of itself and the people of the United States of America, against William Jefferson Clinton, President of the United States of America, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high crimes and misdemeanors.

Article I: In his conduct while President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton, in violation of his constitutional oath faithfully to execute the office of the President of the United States, and to the best of his ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and in violation of his constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, has wilfully corrupted and manipulated the judicial process of the United States for his personal gain and exonerated, impeding the administration of justice, in that: On August 17, 1998, [he] swore to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before a federal grand jury...

Contrary to that oath, [he] wilfully provided perjurious, false and misleading testimony to the grand jury concerning one or more of the following:

(1) the nature and details of his relationship with a subordinate government employee;

(2) prior perjurious, false and misleading testimony he gave in a federal civil rights action brought against him;

(3) prior false and misleading statements he allowed his attorney to make to a federal judge in that civil rights action, and

(4) his corrupt efforts to influence the testimony of witnesses and to impede the discovery of evidence in that civil rights action. In doing this, [he] has undermined the integrity of his office, has brought disrepute on the presidency, has betrayed his trust as President, and has acted in a manner subversive of the rule of law and justice, to the manifest injury of the people of the United States. Wherefore, William Jefferson Clinton, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honour, trust or profit under the United States.

Article II: In his conduct, while President... William Jefferson Clinton, in violation of his constitutional oath... has prevented, obstructed, and impeded the administration of justice, and has to that end engaged personally, and through his subordinates and agents, in a course of conduct or scheme designed to delay, impede, cover up, and conceal the existence of evidence and testimony related to a federal civil rights action brought against him in a duly instituted judicial proceeding. The means used to implement this course of conduct or scheme included one or more of the following acts:

(1) On or about December 17, 1997, [he] corruptly en-

couraged a witness in a federal civil rights action brought against him to execute a sworn affidavit in that proceeding that he knew to be perjurious, false and misleading.

(2) On or about December 17, 1997, [he] corruptly encouraged a witness in a federal civil rights action brought against him to give perjurious, false and misleading testimony, if and when called to testify personally in that proceeding.

(3) On or about December 28, 1997, [he] corruptly engaged, in, encouraged, or supported a scheme to conceal evidence that had been subpoenaed in a federal civil rights action, brought against him in order to corruptly prevent the truthful testimony of that witness at that proceeding at a time when the truthful testimony of that witness would have been harmful to him.

(4) Beginning on or about December 7, 1997, and continuing through and including January 14, 1998, [he] intensified and succeeded in an effort to secure job assistance to a witness in a federal civil rights action brought against him in order to corruptly prevent the truthful testimony of that witness at that proceeding at a time when the truthful testimony of that witness would have been harmful to him.

(5) On January 17, 1998, at his deposition in a federal civil rights action brought against him, [he] corruptly allowed his attorney to make false and misleading statements to a federal judge characterizing an affidavit in order to prevent questioning deemed relevant by the judge. Such false and misleading statements were subsequently acknowledged by his attorney in a communication to that judge.

(6) On or about January 18 and 20-21, 1998, [he] related a false and misleading account of events relevant to a federal civil rights action brought against him to a potential witness in that proceeding, in order to corruptly influence the testimony of that witness.

(7) On or about January 21, 23, and 26, 1998, [he] made false and misleading statements to potential witnesses in a federal grand jury proceeding in order to corruptly influence the testimony of those witnesses. The false and misleading statements made by [him] were repeated by witnesses to the grand jury, causing [it] to receive false and misleading information. In all of this, [he] has undermined the integrity of his office, has brought disrepute on the presidency, has betrayed his trust as President, and has acted in a manner subversive of the rule of law and justice, to the manifest injury to the people... Wherefore, William Jefferson Clinton, by such conduct, warrants impeachment and trial, and removal from office and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honour, trust or profit under the United States. (Reuters)

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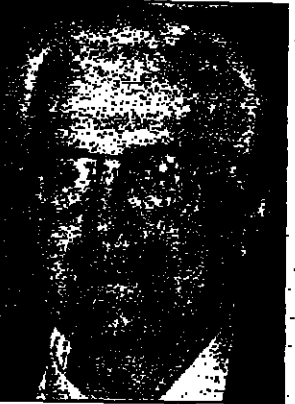
World watches trial of century

STROM THURMOND



The liveliest figure and president of the Senate

HENRY HYDE

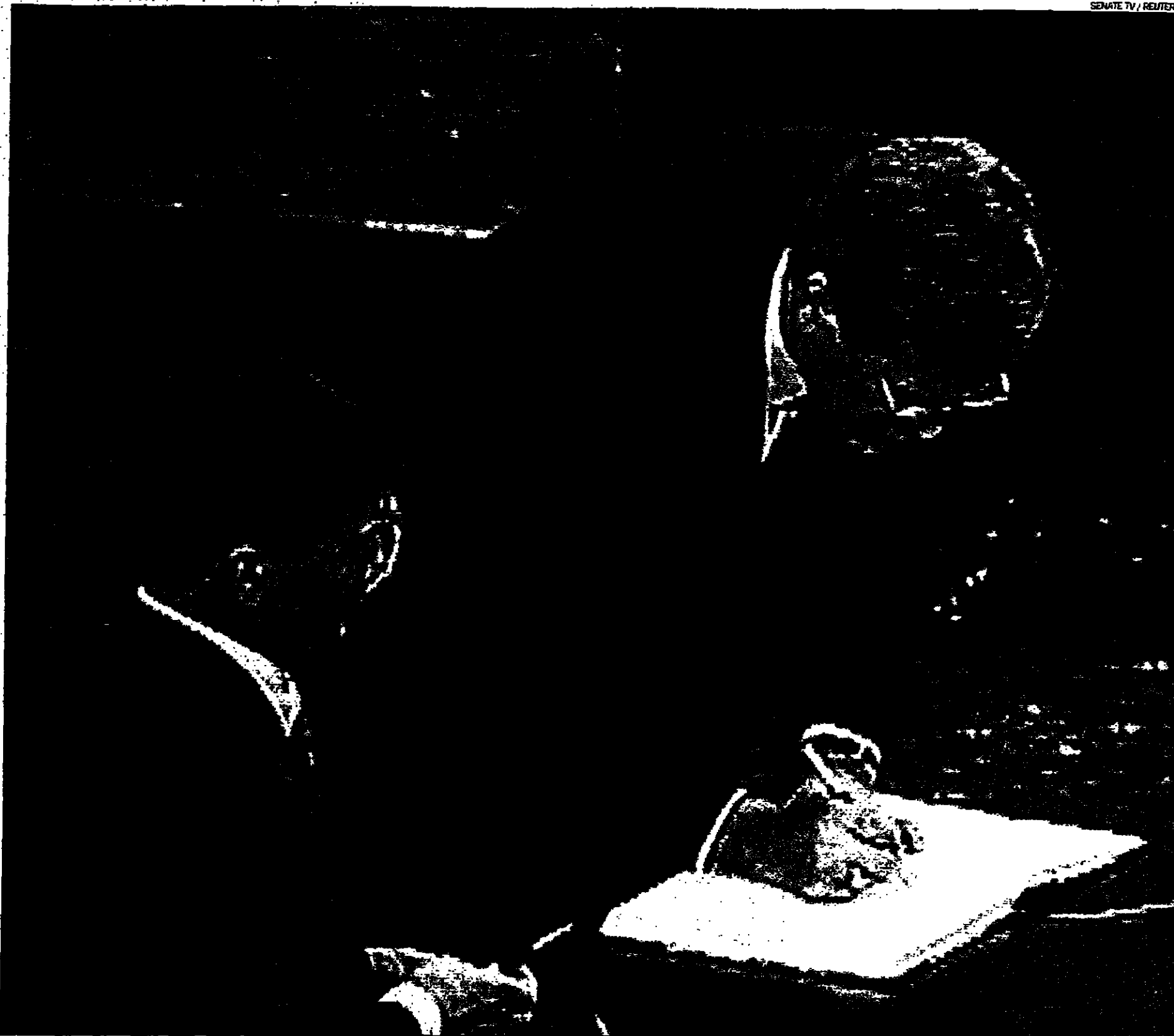


Events left him "depressed, a little bit jittery"

TRENT LOTT



Senate Majority Leader and critic of the President



Trent Lott signs the official oath book after being sworn in by Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist yesterday at the opening of President Clinton's trial

CLINTON TEAM



David Kendall, President Clinton's private attorney



Charles Ruff, the counsel for the White House

Sense of disbelief prevails as solemn pageant unfolds

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH
IN WASHINGTON

IT IS only a short stroll across the Capitol from the House of Representatives to the Senate, but for 13 men yesterday it was a walk into history. For the first time in 131 years the trial of a sitting President opened amid rare Washington pageantry. The atmosphere was one of solemnity but also of disbelief. There were moments of mild absurdity.

These men represented those who had brought the country to this position by passing two articles of impeachment against Bill Clinton, 42nd President of the United States. The 13 were the "managers" who will be outlining the prosecution case, and yesterday they formally delivered the articles to the Senate to allow the trial to begin.

At any other time they would be anonymous members of the House, unknown to the rest of America, of interest only to those in Washington who sit on the same committees or run their errands along the corridors of the Hill. But as members of the Judiciary Committee that held hearings into Mr Clinton's conduct relating to his affair with Monica Lewinsky, they have become known to — though perhaps not loved by — millions of television viewers.

At their head was Henry

Hyde, a stooped bear of a man who has a face that appears often to be either smiling uneasily or wincing. A smile yesterday was unlikely, whatever his Democratic enemies might say. He confessed later that the events had left him "depressed, a little bit jittery". Among his 12 Republican disciples was James Sensenbrenner, a bulldog from Wisconsin who marched forward, his head up, chin out. If anyone got in his way on the walk to the Senate, he looked as though he would punch their lights out.

There too was Asa Hutchinson, a former US attorney from Arkansas who prosecuted the President's brother, Roger, for cocaine dealing. His own brother is a senator who will be weighing the charges he will be helping to present. He showed no concern, swaggering a little, his hand in his pocket.

As the group paused beneath the rotunda, some glanced upwards at Constantino Brumidi's fresco of the Apotheosis of Washington, showing the first President accompanied by Liberty, Victory and Fame. Under the great dome they were handed over by an official of the House to the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate. It was a symbolic moment, the passing of their business from the lower House to the upper — the body that



A ticket for one of the 50 seats in the 596-seat Senate chamber to be handed out to members of the public each day

Washington compared with a saucer in which the decisions of the people's representatives, who could be an excitable lot, should be put to cool.

The 13 blinked in the flashlights of photographers, a group absent the only other time members of the House were sent on such a mission: the 1868 trial of Andrew Johnson. Aside from fashion and banks of lenses, the scene that greeted the managers as they shuffled into the chamber was very similar to Johnson's day. The senators sat at desks in rows like schoolboys, with a

few schoolgirls too this time. Up in the galleries the competition for seats was as intense as it was then. In 1848 the audience was notable for being packed with the mistresses of

senators dressed in their finery. It was harder to tell if such was the case this time but it appeared that there were more advisers taking up the spots allotted to the 100 members of

the jury. The public had been queuing since the chilly dawn for the 50 seats allowed them and, like the press, were given a few minutes each in the chamber to give as many people as possible a flavour of the historic proceedings.

"I wanted to see what could be the trial of the century," said Suzanne Garrow, 36, a lawyer from Northampton, Massachusetts. "I'm trying to check out the scene and be a part of history," said Stevan Johnson, 31, of Washington.

By far the liveliest figure in the entire place was Strom

Thurmond, the 96-year-old from South Carolina, who is the longest-serving senator ever, and president pro-tempore of the Senate. It was a little confusing because everyone kept calling him President. Mr President himself is unlikely to appear.

Mr Thurmond hammered away with the gavel: "Either take your seats or be in the cloakroom," he barked. His petriole colleagues did not hurry and he rapped some more. Mr Thurmond handed over the policing to the Sergeant at Arms, Jim Ziglar. "Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye! All persons are required to keep silence, on pain of imprisonment, while the House of Representatives is exhibiting the articles of impeachment against William Jefferson Clinton."

Eventually there was quiet. The sense of disbelief that this point had been reached was almost tangible. It had seemed impossible, months ago, that this sorry saga would ever end in trial, but the scandal had had as many comebacks as Mr Clinton himself.

Mr Hyde, who read out the articles of impeachment, was perhaps not the best choice for the task. He speaks too quickly and let the sentences run into each other. It was also hard to concentrate on all his talk of undermining the integrity of office and failure to execute the laws because he had a

cold and sniffed throughout. His left hand meanwhile conducted a search of his pockets for a handkerchief. One was eventually located and his nose was dabbed.

Television pundits had excitedly previewed the pageant as being similar to the State Opening of Parliament. But really they were talking things up. Although it is only a very short step across the road for the Chief Justice, William Rehnquist, from the Supreme Court to the Senate, the event was adjourned for nearly three hours for him to arrive.

Then somebody mentioned that the bars on his robes were inspired by a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. When he arrived for the swearing-in of the 100 senators, there was an anxious moment as it looked as though Mr Thurmond, who was uneasily clutching the desk, might fall over. Mr Rehnquist raised his hand to take the oath and Mr Thurmond leaned forward. Was this some new attempt at ceremony? Was the Chief Justice, no spring chicken himself, about to slap Mr Thurmond on the head. He did not. And the slow process of swearing in the 100 senators began.

The name of each was portentously intoned and they came forward to sign their names. A trial, the like of which no one alive has seen, was open.

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Gene find may lead to cancer prevention

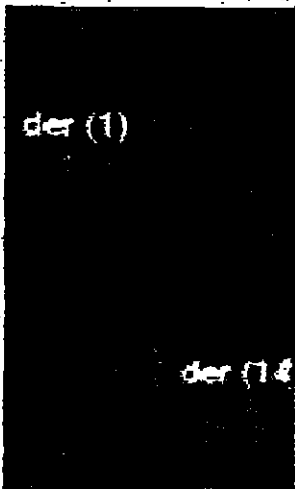
Researchers hope discovery will lead to a drug that can stop tumours developing, writes Sue Lappeman

SCIENTISTS have isolated a gene that plays a vital role in the development of many of the most common forms of cancer, including that of the lung, breast and colon. As a result, at least half of all cancers may eventually become preventable.

The isolation of the Bcl10 gene at the Institute of Cancer Research has been hailed as an historic discovery that will have a major impact on cancer research. Scientists hope the finding will lead to the development of a drug to stop the gene from functioning and prevent cancers from developing.

The mutated gene was discovered in an extremely rare type of tumour found in the stomach of a 75-year-old man being treated for a chest complaint in a Portsmouth hospital ten years ago. The unknown man, who has since died, was unknowingly suffering from B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, of which there are only about 20 known cases. His family was unaware of the impact his illness could have on the future treatment of cancer.

Martin Dyer, the research team leader at the institute, said that analysis of the man's tumour showed that, when mutated, the Bcl10 gene not



Villain of the piece: the mutant gene, der(14)

only lost the ability to kill off cancer-forming cells but speeded up their growth in tumours by transforming normal cells and making them malignant. The team then found the same mutated gene in some of the most common forms of cancer, among them those of the lung, breast and colon.

Dr Dyer said: "This is a very exciting discovery, which shows the value of studying rare cases of malignancy, as

the lessons learnt may be applicable to the more common forms of the disease."

He said the discovery of Bcl10 was extremely important to the understanding of the complex disease and, ultimately, to finding a cure for the "big" cancers that threatened the lives of so many people.

He said: "We would like to think that, if we can target the mutated forms of the protein and suppress their functions, and/or reintroduce the normal cell death-function - the killing function of the protein - then it could be useful therapeutically. That's our hope."

Even if the continuing research is successful, the development of a new drug would still be several years away.

Bcl10 is only the second gene to be discovered that is implicated in such a large number of cancers. The first was P53, which was abnormal in about 50 per cent of all cancers; preliminary results indicate that Bcl10 is contributing to the development of at least as many.

Professor Peter Garland, the institute's chief executive, said the discovery was a remarkable one that would have a major impact on the direction of cancer research.

He said: "In the future it may be possible to develop new treatments which will prevent the abnormal Bcl10 gene from functioning in a way which causes cancers to develop. For example, mutated Bcl10 may provide a suitable target for the design of a new cancer drug."

The research, a collaboration between the Institute of Cancer Research, the Leukaemia Research Fund, the Kay Kendall Leukaemia Fund and the Cancer Research Campaign, was accelerated by the recent development at the institute of a method for rapidly cloning the DNA sequence to allow access to a complete gene.



Valerie Beral: "We can reassure women that later illness is not because of the Pill"

Injury link to breast cancer

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

INJURIES to the breast may contribute to the development of cancer, a new study has suggested.

Women with breast cancer were more than four times as likely to report that they had suffered breast injuries than healthy women, Jan Rigby, of the University of Lancaster, told the Royal Geographical Society - Institute of British Geographers conference.

In the study, 67 breast cancer patients between the ages of 50 and 64 were compared with healthy women of the

same age. Each was interviewed about her medical history, diet, smoking and drinking habits, and other factors.

A significant proportion of the cancer patients had experienced an accident or injury to the breast in the five years before cancer developed," Ms Rigby told the conference at Lancaster University yesterday.

"Most of these were falls in the home where the breast hit something. A minority were the result of physical abuse. The injuries generally were serious enough to cause bruising or bleeding."

Among the breast cancer patients, 52 per cent reported breast injuries, while only 12 per cent of the healthy women did. Ms Rigby acknowledged the fact that women with cancer were more likely to remember a breast injury than were healthy women.

A spokeswoman for the National Breast Cancer Screening Programme expressed some doubt over the findings.

"There have been extensive investigations of injuries to the breast, and there has never been a relationship with breast cancer found before," she said.

Conference reports, page 14

Pill does no long-lasting damage to health

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

THERE is no long-term health danger from the Pill, research has shown. The largest and longest study among women using oral contraceptives has indicated that, ten years after stopping the Pill, they are no more likely to die from illness than those who have never taken it.

The 25-year study involved 46,000 women, two thirds of whom took the Pill. Although it bears out earlier studies, which show there is a slightly greater risk of Pill users developing some cancers or heart disease, it shows clearly that this risk disappears completely ten years after stopping the Pill.

"This must be reassuring to all women," said Clifford Kay, who set up the study for the Royal College of General Practitioners in 1968. "We have known there probably has always been a lurking fear that something dreadful would pop up among women on the Pill after ten, 20 or 25 years. This study shows that we don't need to worry about that any longer."

The women in the study were recruited by 1,400 GPs all over Britain during 1968 and 1969. Half of the women were then on the Pill, although a third of the others later took the contraceptive.

A detailed study of this kind could be carried out only in Britain because the NHS made it possible to track all the women and find out exactly who had been prescribed the Pill and for how long.

The average age of the women was 25 at the start of the survey. Most took the Pill for two years, although some were on it for up to ten years and the average duration was five years. Regardless of how long they were on it, the findings were the same.

At the time the volunteers were recruited, the Pill usually being prescribed contained a medium level of oestrogen. The Pill being prescribed most often at present to the three

million women in Britain who are on it contains only half the amount used in the 1970s and is therefore even less likely to increase the risk of ill-effects for those taking it.

The researchers, from the Royal College and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund epidemiology unit in Oxford, traced the records of all those in the study who died up to the end of 1993. Of the 1,599 deaths, cancer was responsible for 629 deaths and heart disease or strokes for 380. Other deaths were due to a variety of diseases as well as accidents and suicide. One woman died in childbirth.

The 259 deaths from breast cancer and 51 from cervical cancer were slightly above the normal rate for those diseases, although the 55 deaths from ovarian cancer were fewer than expected, suggesting that the Pill provides some protection.

The vast majority of the women in the survey stopped taking the Pill at least 17 years ago, so the researchers can judge accurately whether there are any long-term effects.

Valerie Beral, director of the Oxford unit and author of the report, said the results were conclusive. "We can reassure women that, if they get some illness later in life, it is not because they once took the Pill," she said. "Our new figures show that, by the time women have used the Pill have been off it for ten years, their risk of developing these conditions is similar to what it would have been if they had never taken the Pill at all."

Toni Belfield, of the Family Planning Association, welcomed the report, which is published in the *British Medical Journal* today. She said that, from the 100,000 inquiries the association received each year, it was clear that many women were not confident about taking the Pill, so the findings should go some way to allaying their fears.



Tony Williams, left, and Martin Dyer, right, at the research laboratory

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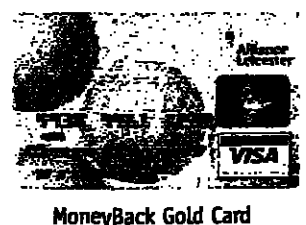
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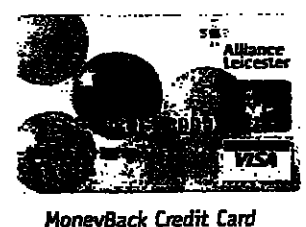
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Keeping up with life on the corset index

Alexandra Freen on 50 years of official attempts to figure out just how much the times have changed

THEY were the days when people knew the really important things in life. The price of back-lacing corsets, iron bedsteads, condensed milk and unskinned wild rabbits were used in measuring inflation, and a wireless licence was the nearest thing to a subscription to the Internet.

A detailed insight into major trends in British life took the late 1940s as its starting point yesterday, as the official yearbook of the United Kingdom celebrated its 50th edition. In demonstrating that Britons are healthier and richer now, it also showed just how quickly the times have changed.

Nigel Pearce, editor of the current edition, *Britain 1999*, said that, in its early years, the book was used largely as a propaganda tool by British diplomats stationed overseas to paint a glowing, if not entirely accurate, picture of life back home. Embarrassing or unattractive facts, such as figures on pollution, might occasionally be "kept discreetly out of the book", he said.

Today it is said to be far more impartial. While it shows that we are now less likely to be killed on the roads, it admits that we will spend far more of our lives sitting in traffic jams and are many times more likely to come from a broken home.

One of the most revealing insights into how daily life and tastes have changed is provided by the basket of goods and services used to calculate the

OH, I SAY

ONE quaint way in which social and cultural changes can be illustrated is in the prose styles used in the handbook over the decades. As you read this extract from *Britain 1956* on leisure pursuits, you can almost hear the clipped tones of a 1950s dinner-served BBC radio presenter.

"The public house now attracts a very wide circle of casual customers (both men and women) as well as many regulars, who meet for a drink and a chat, and perhaps to play some traditional public-house game such as darts. A new, and in some ways rival, feature of urban life, especially in London, is the coffee bar. A characteristic of many of these coffee bars, which stay open until late at night and are becoming increasingly popular as a rendezvous for young people, is their modern decor..."

retail price index. In 1947 it included: wild rabbits (unskinned), lard, condensed milk, back-lacing corsets, a gallon of lamp oil, an iron bedstead, a hair mattress, gramophone records (78s), a rubber-roller table machine, tin of disinfectant, a pound of soda and a wireless licence.

The basket for 1997 included burgers, fromage fraits, take-aways, tracksuit bottoms, a

smoke alarm, a microwave oven, a subscription to the Internet, contact lenses, a portable CD player, computer games, unleaded petrol and private medical insurance.

The way people spend their money also indicates changing priorities. A third of spending now goes on services, such as electricity, gas, water, postage, telephones, holidays, recreation and entertainment, compared with less than a tenth 50 years ago.

Mr Pearce said that, for him, the most significant change had been the way that advances in technology had caused electricity to take over virtually every aspect of our lives. He added: "What is also remarkable is the accelerating rate of change."

The book has been published virtually every year since 1946, with a few gaps in the 50s. When it first came out, the country was recovering from the war and rationing was still in place.

Since then, the most significant health statistic is that life expectancy has increased by about nine years. In 1948 40 per cent of deaths occurred under the age of 65. By 1996 the proportion had fallen to 17 per cent.

The widespread introduction of antibiotics is partly responsible for this, with the number of deaths from infectious diseases falling from more than 30,000 in 1948 to fewer than 4,000 in 1996.

Widespread immunisation for common diseases has also



A bread queue in 1946: rationing was still in place when the guide began. Today the shopping list has changed out of all recognition

had a huge impact, particularly on children's health. Between 1948 and 1968, notifications of measles were running at about 400,000 a year. In 1995, there were 7,447.

There have also been improvements to environmental health. In 1957 there was no fish population in the Thames between Kew in the West and Gravesend in the East, largely because output from London's

Victorian sewer system had starved the river of oxygen. After a concerted clean-up, there are now 116 species of fish in the upper Thames Estuary.

In home life, one in 13 families were headed by a single parent in 1971, compared with nearly one in four today. There has also been a steady rise in the number of one-person households, up from 14 per cent of all households in

1961 to 27 per cent in 1997.

Transport figures have changed enormously. In 1956 there were more than 3.75 million cars licensed to use Britain's roads and more than 1.25 million motorcycles. Ten years later the number of licensed cars was 9.5 million and, by 1996, it had leapt to 22 million, although the number of motorcycles, scooters and mopeds had fallen to 739,000. Much of

this astonishing growth in road traffic has been at the expense of the railways. The first handbook, published in 1946, states that "the four main railway companies had a total track mileage, including sidings, of about 50,000 miles." Today, the network is 20,000 miles.

More than half of the 17,000 copies of the handbook are still supplied to the Foreign Of-

fice, but its production has been moved from the Central Office of Information to the Office for National Statistics.

Reviewing the figures, Mr Pearce said: "It remains to be seen whether such a break-neck state of flux can be sustained into the next millennium or whether it will broaden out into a slower-paced era of measured planning and reflection."

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Aussie taunts ruin Poms' paradise

BY A CORRESPONDENT

BRITONS who emigrate Down Under are being driven home by anglophobic Australians, a survey has found. An average of 240 Britons move to Australia each week, but at least 80 of them return because their neighbours are not as friendly as those in Ramsay Street.

The survey, carried out by the United Kingdom Settlers' Association in Melbourne, found that 39 per cent felt that anglophobia was rife in Australia, and that 31 per cent felt that their complaints were not taken as seriously as those made by other minorities.

Barry Hunter, of the UKSA, said that name-calling, hostile media coverage and demeaning stereotypes all played a part in ruining the great Australian dream.

"A lot of people call the British 'Poms', and there are many variations on that name: 'Whingeing Pommie bastard' is a pretty common one," he

said. "It's half jocular and half serious, but many people just don't like it."

Mr Hunter said that the English also took offence to such sayings as "Gimmie a beer, I'm as dry as a Pommie's bath towel," which implied that they didn't wash enough. "A few days ago... a man I had never seen before came up to me and said: 'Why don't you go back to England?' He then gave me the 'V' sign."

There are so many snide comments about the British in the media... hearing about Prince Edward's engagement, a radio reporter said: "And now we have to put up with yet another royal wedding..."

Penelope Lises, 25, who returned to Britain after two years in Australia, said: "When I first started looking for a job, no one would even give me an interview when they found out I was British. And there's all that whingeing Pommie stuff -- constantly."

End of the tinkling mobile

MOBILE phones are increasingly at risk of being damaged by male users who drop them in the lavatory while fiddling with zips and belts, repairers have revealed.

Hundreds are letting their phones slip through their fingers, according to Coverplan. The worst culprits are men who take the phones with them to the gym, in pubs and clubs, said the firm, which handles extended warranty repairs for Dixons.

Michael Marks, Coverplan's marketing director, said: "Amazingly, an increasing number of people admit they were talking on them in the loo. Young men should think again to stop their prize possession becoming ruined. Just two seconds underwater will wreck a mobile."

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The producer Prince goes back to work

Engagement did not long distract Prince Edward from his other great love, Michael Harvey writes

FOR Prince Edward, work comes first. After all the engagement fuss and photocalls, he was back yesterday where he feels he belongs — behind his desk at Ardent Productions, his television production company.

Now that the announcement of his engagement to Sophie Rhys-Jones is out of the way, the Prince, who prefers to be called Edward Windsor, can concentrate on getting on with his job.

He told *The Times* yesterday that it was only after Ardent had "turned the corner" that he decided the time was right to propose. Like any modern professional couple, he and Miss Rhys-Jones wanted to wait until their careers were on an even keel.

"Basically there was no point in starting Ardent and starting married life at the

same time. That would have been silly," he said. "Apart from anything else we weren't ready then."

The Prince loves his work, but being a member of the Royal Family as well as a television producer does have its disadvantages. Many broadcasters are so keen to avoid the appearance of currying favour that his ideas — and programmes have to be much better than other producers'.

"In the [United] States, they tend to accept you on your credentials and don't get too hung-up about background. Over here people are more nervous about appearing to be in any way stacking up to be said."

"Ardent does its level best not to trade on the name. But nine times out of ten the first idea which they want Ardent to make has got a royal connection."

But once they have made the first one, they want to move on to other things. We have proved our ability to be able to make good programmes consistently and the broadcasters with whom we

have a good relationship understand that."

The Prince, 34, is confident that the company will succeed, despite five years of losses amounting to £1.5 million.

"We are about to enter the busiest year of our existence. It has been building over the last year, and broadcasters are now asking us to supply programmes," he said.

In 1998 the company almost broke even. With 40 programmes between the drawing board and completion in the next 18 months, 1999 should see Ardent in profit for the first time.

"We are looking at 20 to 25 hours of programmes in development," he said. "Suddenly we are hitting an enormous workload. We are talking to a number of different clients and broadcasters in Britain, Europe and America."

"You know that some are going to fall by the wayside, you know that some are going to get delayed, but that is more than we have ever had. We always wanted to be an international company. The development of clients and the connections overseas is where it is all beginning to happen."

The Prince, who is head of production, speaks with the enthusiasm of a man who has found his true vocation.

"Nothing is more fun than coming up with an idea, selling it to somebody, getting them to say yes and then going out and making it," he said.

"It is great. You live on the edge and when it is all buzzing with people running around, it is a thoroughly exciting job."

It has not always been so much fun. Edward set up Ardent with a close friend, Eben Foggitt, in cramped offices in Charlotte Street in December 1993. By 1995 they had only got four hours of programmes on air. The following year saw the failure of the Channel 4 political sitcom *Andie's Bar*, which was almost universally panned. In 1997, business dipped alarmingly.

Last June Ardent moved to its new premises in the Old Stables at Bagshot Park, the 120-year-old mansion that will be the Prince's marital home. There is ample space for the several production offices, all of which have become hives of activity.

Last year began with the commissioning of *The Cater Street Hangman*, a pilot for a series of Victorian detective dramas. The murder mystery is the first of the Inspector Pitt novels by Anne Perry, whose



Prince Edward: "an enormous workload"

27 books are massively popular in America. Prince Edward spoke personally to the writer and has bought the rights to the entire series. Anne Perry is perhaps better known in Britain as the New Zealand teenager who helped to murder her best friend's mother in 1954. The crime inspired the film

Heavenly Creatures, which starred Kate Winslet.

The *Cater Street* film was broadcast on ITV in September and in the US on the Arts and Entertainment channel just before Christmas. Three more two-hour mysteries are in development in a deal worth more than £1.5 million.

Such mainstream drama is where the Prince sees Ardent's future. He has no wish to provide further ammunition for those who say his company is trading off his name.

The Prince is still uncomfortable with media attention, despite his polished performance in front of the cameras at his engagement announcement, which he said went "as well as could be expected."

He wants to throw himself back into Ardent and plan as private a wedding as the public will allow. While reporters can no longer grill him about whether he will marry Miss Rhys-Jones, he said that they were bound to come up with a new question. "I dread to think what it is going to be."



Sophie Rhys-Jones returns to her office yesterday, insisting there is work to be done

Confident fiancée charms the press pack

By CLAUDIA JOSEPH AND MICHAEL HARVEY

SOPHIE RHYS-JONES returned to work yesterday, eager to prove that, despite becoming a royal fiancée, it was business as usual.

She arrived at her office in Mayfair with a police escort to be greeted by hordes of reporters. While Prince Edward was hidden away in his television production offices at Bagshot Park, Surrey, she was lapping up the attention of the press.

Outside R-IH Public Relations, she said: "I have set this company up and I have commitments to clients and staff. I want to carry that on."

Her confident attitude was in contrast to that of the shy Lady Diana Spencer, with whom comparisons have inevitably been drawn.

Miss Rhys-Jones said she was looking forward to life in the public eye, although she was exhausted by the recent attention. Asked about how she would avoid the curse of previous royal weddings, she replied, smiling: "I will see about that when it happens."

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Liz Shankland with her husband, Gerald Toms

Bride announces: give Mrs a miss

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A NEWLY married female executive has spent £40 on a newspaper advertisement attacking the "misguided fuddy-duddies" who disapprove of her keeping her maiden name.

Liz Shankland, 35, married Gerald Toms, 46, a police superintendent, two months ago. It is a second marriage for both. Ms Shankland decided to keep her own name both professionally and personally. But she became increasingly exasperated by people who insisted on addressing her as Mrs Gerald Toms.

She did not tell her husband, who is stationed at Cardiff, that she was placing the double-column advertisement in the Welsh newspaper *The Western Mail*.

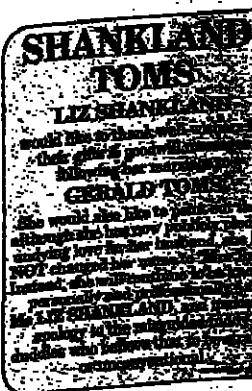
After thanking friends for their gifts and goodwill messages, Ms Shankland wrote: "She would also like to point out that, although she has now publicly pledged undying love for her husband, she has not changed her name to Mrs Toms. Instead she will continue to be known — personally and professionally — as Ms Liz Shankland and makes no apology to the misguided fuddy-duddies who believe that to be strange or unconventional."

She said yesterday: "I'm no raving feminist, but I believe strongly that a woman should be able to retain her identity when she marries."

Mr Toms, who was responsible for security at last year's European Summit in Cardiff, said: "Liz is a professional in her own right and I understand and respect her decision."

John Morgan, associate editor of *GQ*, who writes in *The Times* on 10 January, said: "She is entitled to call herself by whatever name she wants."

The advert placed in *The Western Mail*



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Desert Fox air crew return to their families

THE British servicemen and women who took part in the airstrikes against Iraq spoke of the terror of combat and their fear of hitting civilian targets, as they arrived back in Scotland yesterday.

After spending two months in the Gulf for Operation Desert Fox, the 150 members of 12 Squadron, the RAF Tornado Fighters, returned to their base at Lossiemouth, Moray, to an emotional welcome.

Waiting on the Tarmac was the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, and air force chiefs, alongside wives, girlfriends and children. Despite the freezing drizzle, the families wore broad smiles as their loved ones stepped off the Lockheed Tristar transport aircraft to the sound of a piper playing *Scotland the Brave*. The mood on the eight-hour flight from Al-Jalibiyah in Kuwait had been euphoric, one pilot said.

Families clapped and cheered when the Tristar came into view in the blustery skies over Lossiemouth, escorted by two Tornado bombers from the 617 Dam Buster Squadron. It landed at 12.22pm, two minutes behind schedule, after a journey of over 3,000 miles.

Wing Commander Steve Barnes, 36, was first off the plane. After shaking hands with Mr Robertson he turned to embrace his wife, Zoë, 28, whom he last saw in October. She said later: "My face ached because I had been smiling so much. It was so exciting seeing all the guys come back fit and well."

Moments later wives and children ran forward to greet husbands and fathers. Squadron Leader Andy Box, 34, a senior engineer, said that being reunited with his family felt "just like Christmas when you're a four-year-old".

Embracing his wife, Lesley, 35, and children, Emma, 2, and Christopher, 4, he said: "We are going to have Christmas all over again. It's wonderful to be back."

Bethany Sleight, 2, was refusing to let go of her father, Sergeant Tim Sleight, 33, also an engineer. Speechless and grinning, she clung to his neck as he hugged his wife Jo, 29, and son Sam, four.

The squadron flew 28 sorties over Iraq during Desert Fox.

Shirley English sees emotional homecoming of RAF personnel to their base in Scotland

with 75 per cent accuracy. The crew now have just over two weeks' leave before returning to duties at Lossiemouth and possibly active service in Iraq.

Wing Commander Barnes, who flew three sorties, praised his team, many of whom had not been shot at before and were very nervous. "We all felt an enormous sense of responsibility. We could not afford to lose anyone."

"All the world's press was watching over this mission. We could not accept any civilian damage. That was a very real concern for us."

Combat was frightening, he said. "It's a mixture of fear and adrenalin and not an experience you enjoy."

One pilot, who cannot be named for security reasons, said flying over Iraq with anti-aircraft missiles exploding around his Tornado was terrifying. "It was my first active combat, something I have trained for for nine years. It was quite surreal. You could see what looked like fireworks flashing outside but could hear nothing and then they would explode. The first time it happened it took my breath away for a few minutes."

Flying Officer Kate Ansell, 23, from Bristol, a navigation intelligence specialist, told how after briefing one air crew about their mission, she was handed letters by three men to give to loved ones if they failed to return. "It was a huge relief to count them all back safely," she said.

Personnel celebrated Christmas with an *It's A Knockout* competition at the base, but one navigator said it was "pretty miserable". He added that, after returning from missions, the adrenalin was rushing and "all we wanted was a few beers. Instead we had to make do with some cheesy television

and a book. I can't wait to hit the town tonight."

Mr Robertson paid tribute to the "invaluable and decisive part" played by the squadron in "their accurate and precise attacks against Saddam Hussein's war machine". That was the only language the dictator understood. His ability to threaten his neighbours had been curtailed.

He added: "Britain is proud of these forces who risked their lives to uphold international law and order and ensure the safety of the Gulf region."

Tony Blair is expected to visit the Lossiemouth base later this month. The British presence in the Gulf is being maintained by two squadrons from RAF Marham in Norfolk, which will continue Operation Southern Watch over the Iraqi no-fly zone.



An RAF serviceman is greeted by his family at Lossiemouth yesterday. The 150 personnel returning from Kuwait had not seen relatives for two months



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Mandelson and his little local difficulty

Dominic Kennedy reports on an alleged vendetta against MP's former agent, and a trial dropped at the last minute

PETER MANDELSON changed his written evidence to give a fuller account of a London meeting with Bernard Carr, his former Hartlepool agent, before Mr Carr's fraud trial collapsed costing £100,000 and provoking new police inquiries.

Mr Mandelson, then Minister without Portfolio, was so keen to avoid having to give evidence in person that he incurred considerable cost in employing a solicitor.

The disclosure came as it emerged that Mr Mandelson has since discussed the collapse of the case with the Attorney-General, the Home Office and Cleveland Police.

Mr Carr's aborted fraud case has left a legacy of bitterness, suspicion and blame in Hartlepool, the constituency where Mr Mandelson returned to public duty yesterday for the first time since resigning as Trade and Industry Secretary on December 23.

The last thing Mr Mandelson needs as he tries to plan his return to mainstream politics is trouble on a second front. But what appeared to be a little local difficulty involving a friend with whom he stayed during the early days of his candidacy in the town is threatening to become another source of discomfort.

The case against Mr Carr, the MP's election agent in 1992, who was accused of fiddling council expenses, was eagerly awaited because of the likely prospect that Mr Mandelson would be called as a witness. But minutes before the case was due to start at Teesside Crown Court last year it was dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service. The controversy, however, has failed to die. The Carr affair has already been blamed for a backlash against Labour in Hartlepool where the council suffered huge losses in last May's elections.

Intrigue grew this weekend when Richard Brunstrom, the Assistant Chief Constable of Cleveland, issued a highly unusual statement saying: "Police inquiries arising from the collapse of the trial in February 1998 have not been completed. It is a complicated situation which merits careful and measured consideration."

Mr Carr also had a charge of gross indecency in a public lavatory dropped by Hartlepool Magistrates

at the request of the Crown Prosecution Service in December 1997. After the collapse of the trial Mr Mandelson angrily criticised police incompetence.

In police circles there is resentment that Mr Mandelson changed his written evidence a month before the fraud case came to court. He apparently wanted to make clear that Mr Carr did discuss housing matters — not just Labour Party business — during a meeting in London for which the councillor, then Hartlepool's borough housing chairman, claimed expenses.

Mr Mandelson's supporters insist that the MP gave a full account during his hour-long interview with detectives but that the witness statement he signed, written by the police officers, may well have excluded



Carr: several unhappy events

some matters because it was only a one-page summary.

The pressure on police to act will grow after Bill Iseley, Hartlepool Council's former Labour chief whip, said yesterday that it was known at a local government conference in Scarborough the weekend before the trial that the case might collapse.

"I did hear from somebody that they had heard that the thing might collapse," Mr Iseley said.

Mr Mandelson's supporters say that people became confused because they knew the MP was not needed to give evidence and through Chinese whispers this changed to an assumption that the case was being dropped. Mr Iseley, though, says he did expect that Mr Mandelson would be in court.

Mr Carr was charged with deception after a colourful escapade when

the bachelor visited London in August 1996 to compete in *The Daily Telegraph's* worst cook competition. He came third with a stomach-churning recipe of turnip and fish soup with fishfinger croutons.

Unfortunately, another councillor spotted the report in the newspaper and, since the finalists enjoyed an all-expenses-paid trip to London, queried why he claimed £150 expenses from the council.

Mr Carr repaid the money but the fraud squad was called in and he was charged with seven counts of deception totalling £666 and one of attempted deception, despite making strenuous denials during long police interviews.

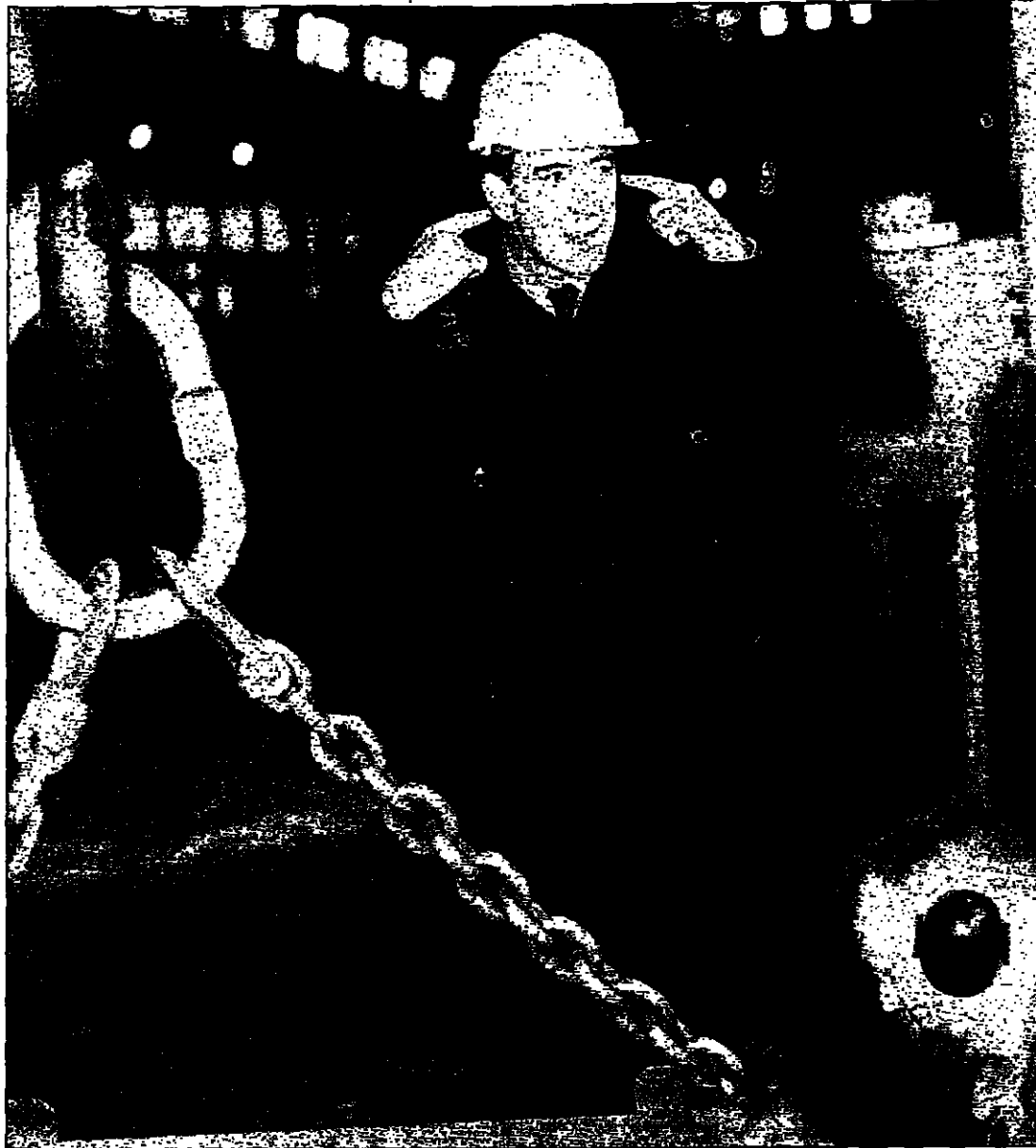
Mr Carr justified claiming expenses by saying that while in the capital he saw Mr Mandelson to discuss issues relating to his duties as housing chairman.

The fraud squad travelled to London to interview Mr Mandelson and the MP signed a statement of about five paragraphs summing up his evidence. Mr Mandelson was then given warning that he would be called as a witness in the fraud trial, which would be bound to attract media attention at a time when he was correctly being tipped for promotion to the Cabinet.

Mr Mandelson spent the weeks before the trial asking why he was wanted, being asked about a matter on which he insisted he knew nothing. Mr Carr's defence team, though, wanted to cross-examine Mr Mandelson about the police statements he had signed which, according to a police source suggested their London meeting had been about Labour Party matters.

About a month before the trial date, Mr Mandelson swore an expanded written version of the events. This made clear that Mr Carr came to talk about an election hearing in Hartlepool, but crucially that they also talked about dilapidated houses that Mr Mandelson wanted the council to act on.

Minutes before the trial was due to begin Jeremy Richardson, the prosecution barrister, interviewed Brian Hanson, the long-serving council leader, and John Walton, the respected and experienced finance officer, about expenses procedures. The CPS then decided to drop



Peter Mandelson at Clydesdale Forge Company yesterday on his first constituency visit since resigning

the charges, claiming answers received that morning directly contradicted earlier evidence from the council, seriously weakening its criminal case against Mr Carr. Both council chiefs strongly deny that they ever changed their evidence.

CPS sources maintain that the dropping of the case had nothing to do with the second version of Mr Mandelson's evidence.

Some people in Hartlepool feel there was a vendetta against Mr Carr and that the deception charges,

the alerting of the police to the "cot-tagging" incident and a rent row which led to a repossession order on his flat are evidence that enemies were trying to destroy his bid to leave the council.

There is even suspicion as to whether the police are making more inquiries. Mr Mandelson's supporters believe the police are creating a smokescreen to draw attention from their alleged bungling of the case.

Leading article, page 23

Heartfelt return of prodigal son

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY

PETER MANDELSON returned to his main job yesterday, tending to his constituents of Hartlepool, and said that he was glad to be back in a place where you knew who your friends were.

"It's nice to be back among people who know me and take me for what I am, who support me and keep telling me to smile and keep my chin up," he said. "It's a great town, this, with no-nonsense attitudes. People are not carried away by media hype one way or the other. They take a very sensible, sober view of the world."

That's why, when you tumble out of the fast political world of London, it always seems much safer and more secure in Hartlepool, where you know who your friends are."

Mr Mandelson spent the day listening to the woes of constituents at his regular surgery, and meeting captains of what is left of Hartlepool's industry. The fallen Trade Secretary, who was on the guest list for the Prince of Wales's 50th birthday party at Highgrove, is filling his diary with less exotic invitations.

Yesterday, touring a metal works in Hartlepool run by Caparo, the steel group owned by the Labour peer Lord Paul, he was invited to the opening of a new Russian forging press. Far from feeling like a Cinderella, Mr Mandelson looked relieved to be back in the town, where he has been treated like a favourite, if prodigal, son.

Steve Wallace, his agent, said that they had been continually stopped and welcomed. "It's a very canny town: once they decide you are one of our own, they will support you."

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IRA warns of frustration

BY MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE IRA issued a new year statement yesterday that gave a warning of "growing frustration" within the republican movement. It accused Unionist leaders of resurrecting the same preconditions that caused the collapse of its last ceasefire in 1996.

The statement was condemned by Unionists, who accused the IRA of threatening a return to violence unless Unionists dropped their demand that the republicans begin disarmament before Sinn Féin can be admitted to Northern Ireland's new Assembly in the spring.

Michael McGimpsey, a leading Ulster Unionist Party assemblyman, said that the IRA was attempting to blackmail Unionists. Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, called the statement a blatant threat. Billy Hutchinson, of the Progressive Unionist Party, said the peace process could yet implode if the decommissioning issue was not surmounted.

The IRA's statement, published in the republican newspaper *An Phoblacht*, said that, nine months after the accord, Unionists were doing their best to prevent it being implemented because they remained "wedded to the politics of domination and inequality".

A loyalist paramilitary sentenced to a total of 400 years in prison was released from the Maze yesterday after serving ten years. Denis McLean, of the Ulster Volunteer Force, was convicted of 44 offences including three murders, six attempted murders and the manslaughter of a policewoman.

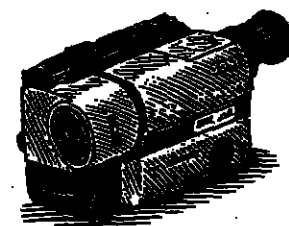
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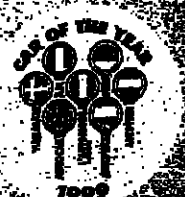
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New school tables to show where cash goes

Education authorities must account for spending, writes Roland Watson

PARENTS will be able to compare how local education authorities divide their cash between the classroom and administration in new league tables designed to ensure that more money is spent on pupils.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, will announce the initiative today in a speech aimed at spearheading the Government's new year programme.

He will also outline new rules giving school inspectors the power to put specific responsibilities out to tender if authorities are found to be failing. It could lead to private firms, charities or neighbouring authorities taking over responsibility for literacy and numeracy teaching, strategies to improve failing schools, or help for socially excluded children.

The details will come as Mr Blunkett becomes the first senior Cabinet minister to attempt to drag the focus away from the fallout of the Mandelson home-loan affair and on to

policy issues. He will also attempt to quash the impression that the departure of new Labour's leading moderniser from the Cabinet has opened the way for a return to more traditional Labour values, a mood fuelled by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Blunkett will tell the North of England Education Conference that modernisation is the only way to achieve traditional Labour aspirations such as greater equality, a better education and health service and reduced crime.

He will call for a "bold and radical" approach to delivering the reform and innovation needed on the brink of the millennium, including more use of money from the private sector in schools and transport.

"It means taking decisive action where public services are not delivering, whether we are talking about LEAs, schools, hospitals or welfare provision," he will say.

Hackney, in East London, may provide the first opportunity. An "improvement team" is already in place, but continuing friction between the council leadership and a new chief education officer has led to speculation that the authority will fail a second inspection soon.

Blunkett: new league
tables initiative

Mr Blunkett's speech, to local education authority leaders in the North of England, has been recast to include a modernising message for those La-

bour MPs and ministers minded to exploit Mr Mandelson's demise as a way of redirecting the Government.

Speeches by other Cabinet heavyweights will follow. Mr Prescott, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, will all reinforce the message that the Government will maintain its election promise to govern as new Labour.

The league tables to be announced by Mr Blunkett will give for the first time a comparison of how authorities divide their budgets between administering and delivering services.

Although they will take into account the differing demands of different areas, Mr Blunkett wants to show up those authorities with inflated administration bills as a way of pressuring them to put more into classrooms. He will say: "We cannot afford to let children down."

Education, pages 34-37



Pinochet: awaits ruling

US review may bring Pinochet to trial

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THE American Justice Department said yesterday that it was investigating General Augusto Pinochet to see whether the former Chilean dictator could be tried in the United States.

Janet Reno, the Attorney General, said that her department's investigation of a fatal car bombing in Washington in 1976 had not been closed. The bombing killed Orlando Letelier, the former Chilean Ambassador and a prominent Pinochet critic, and his colleague, Ronni Moffitt, an American citizen. When asked if General Pinochet, 83, could ever be brought to trial in the United States, Ms Reno replied: "That's what we have under review."

A Chilean intelligence operative, Michael Townley, was convicted in the case. Moffitt's relatives have been pressing for a prosecution of General Pinochet, but the United States has so far remained cautious about becoming involved in the legal wrangle over his status in Britain, where he has been held since October 16 pending a decision on whether he can be extradited to Spain on human rights charges.

Football chief is accused of arson

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A WEALTHY businessman who controlled Doncaster Rovers hired a former soldier to burn down the football club's main stand, a court was told yesterday. Ken Richardson, who described himself as the club's benefactor, was said to have been linked to a mobile telephone apparently discarded by the arsonists amid the charred wreckage at the Belle Vue ground.

The find led to the arrest of Alan Kristiansen, a private investigator, who told police that he had been hired by Mr Richardson, a shareholder at the club and heavily involved in its management.

Mr Richardson, 60, made his fortune in the waste-paper business who lives on the Isle of Man. When questioned by police, he suggested that the blaze could have been the work of one of his enemies. He denies conspiracy to commit arson.

Roger Keen, QC, for the prosecution, said that investigation into the fire on June 29, 1995, showed that someone had splashed petrol and then set fire to it. The arsonists left behind four empty fuel cans, a rucksack and a mobile phone. Kristiansen has admitted his part in the offence and is the principal witness against Mr Richardson, Sheffield Crown Court was told.

Mr Keen said that for some time Mr Richardson had been heavily involved in the club's affairs. Mr Keen said that Mr Richardson's motive might remain secret but he suggested that the ground was an area of growing revenue potential. "It may emerge that the motive was a financial one," he said.

The trial continues.

Families asked to wash patients

BY HELEN JOHNSTONE

PATIENTS' relatives and friends have been asked by a hospital trust to help to feed, wash and shave them because of a shortage of nurses.

Notices are being handed to visitors at Queen Alexandra Hospital and St Mary's Hospital in Portsmouth, Hampshire, asking for volunteers. Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust runs the two acute hospitals, with 1,100 beds, and has some 20 nursing vacancies.

Surgeons are assisting doctors in medical wards who are struggling to cope: both hospitals have been overwhelmed with people suffering respiratory, heart and urinary problems. The Department of Health

said that an unusually high demand for medical beds in Portsmouth had prompted the trust to seek volunteers for non-clinical tasks so that nurses could provide medical care. A spokesman said: "As long as the relatives are happy and it is not compromising patient care, it is acceptable."

Doug Dunn, of Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Community Health Council, said that pressure on hospital staff this winter was the worst he could recall. He thought the request for help was reasonable. The trust said yesterday it had had a positive response from most of the people involved.

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مكتبة زليخا

Fast boat beats racing cars, says Mansell

Ex-Formula One world champion pays £1.3m for ocean-going luxury yacht, reports Adam Sherwin

NIGEL MANSELL has swapped racing cars for the "motor yacht of the millennium" — and says he gets more satisfaction out of boating than Formula One.

The former world champion driver has paid £1.3 million for a 74ft vessel, the most expensive on display at the 48th London International Boat Show, which opens at Earls Court in London today.

Mansell intends to take the Manhattan 74, which sleeps eight in complete comfort, on a

voyage around the world, which could last for a year. "I need to spend more time on the water because I suffer in the cold," he said.

"I already have a 36ft boat, but that's a day boat. You can live full-time on this boat — it's bigger than five houses."

The Manhattan 74 is produced by Sunseeker International, a British company based in Dorset. The vessel contains all home comforts for life on the high seas: the port side houses an elevated dining

area that seats eight and, below decks, a master stateroom has a queen-size bed, sofa and an ensuite shower with toilet. Two twin guest cabins lead off from the guest stateroom, while the crew cabin contains two berths with wardrobe and vanity unit. The company has orders for 100 of the boats.

Mansell will use the vessel to explore sunnier climes. He said: "We will moor it at Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and take it for a cruise around the Bahamas. At other times we might dock it near La Manga in Spain."

Mansell's boat took three months to build and possesses the latest design in hydrodynamic hulls. The manufacturers claim a maximum speed of 35 knots, but Mansell thinks he can squeeze some more out of his new vessel.

He said: "I think it will go up to 40 knots and that will be a sensational feeling. I get more satisfaction out of boating than motor racing."

"In Formula One there are a lot of highs and lows, but with boats the feeling is always



Pole position: Nigel Mansell in front of the Manhattan 74 yacht at the London International Boat Show yesterday. He wants to sail around the world



The interior of the yacht, which sleeps eight comfortably

Times issues challenge to circle globe

By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE call went out on the opening day of the London International Boat Show for the towns and cities of Britain to take up the challenge of racing each other around the world in *The Times* Clipper 2000 race.

The race, for paying amateurs sailing in identical 60ft yachts named after sponsoring towns and cities, sets off in October 2000. It is organised by the yachtman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston and sponsored by *The Times*.

After leaving the South Coast, contestants will sail round the middle latitudes of the world by way of more than 12 ports, including stops at Hawaii, Japan, China, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Africa and the United States.

The unique feature of the race, in which crews will compete for *The Times* Trophy over six legs, is the chance it offers for towns and cities to compete against each other. Speaking at the Boat Show yesterday, Sir Robin com-

pared the concept with league football: "An awful lot of people get behind their team and, if it does well, it is good for the town and good for the city. We thought why not take this concept a stage further and have cities competing around the world sailing a yacht for the millennium?"

John Bryant, Deputy Editor of *The Times*, said: "An awful lot of people are looking around for something significant to do to mark the millennium and we know that many people harbour in their hearts this dream to sail around the world. The combination of the Clipper race and the millennium will be irresistible."

To sponsor and secure the name of a boat, cities or towns must pay a fee of £100,000. That sum could come from various sources, including private business or individuals, perhaps working in conjunction with the local chamber of commerce. The fee also buys a package of promotional opportunities for the sponsoring city, including one free berth for each of the six legs and corporate entertaining days before and during the race.

Sir Robin emphasised that sailing experience was not required, since thorough pre-race training would be offered as part of a package.

Up to 12 boats will compete in the 34,000-mile race, which will take ten months to circumnavigate the globe. Each boat will be led by a professional skipper and the organisers are hoping that a core crew of five will complete the whole race on each boat, with another 14 crew members participating in either one, two or three legs of the race.

For information on *The Times* Clipper 2000 race please telephone 01234 711550 or see the Clipper Ventures website at www.clipper-ventures.com



The Times clipper at the launch yesterday

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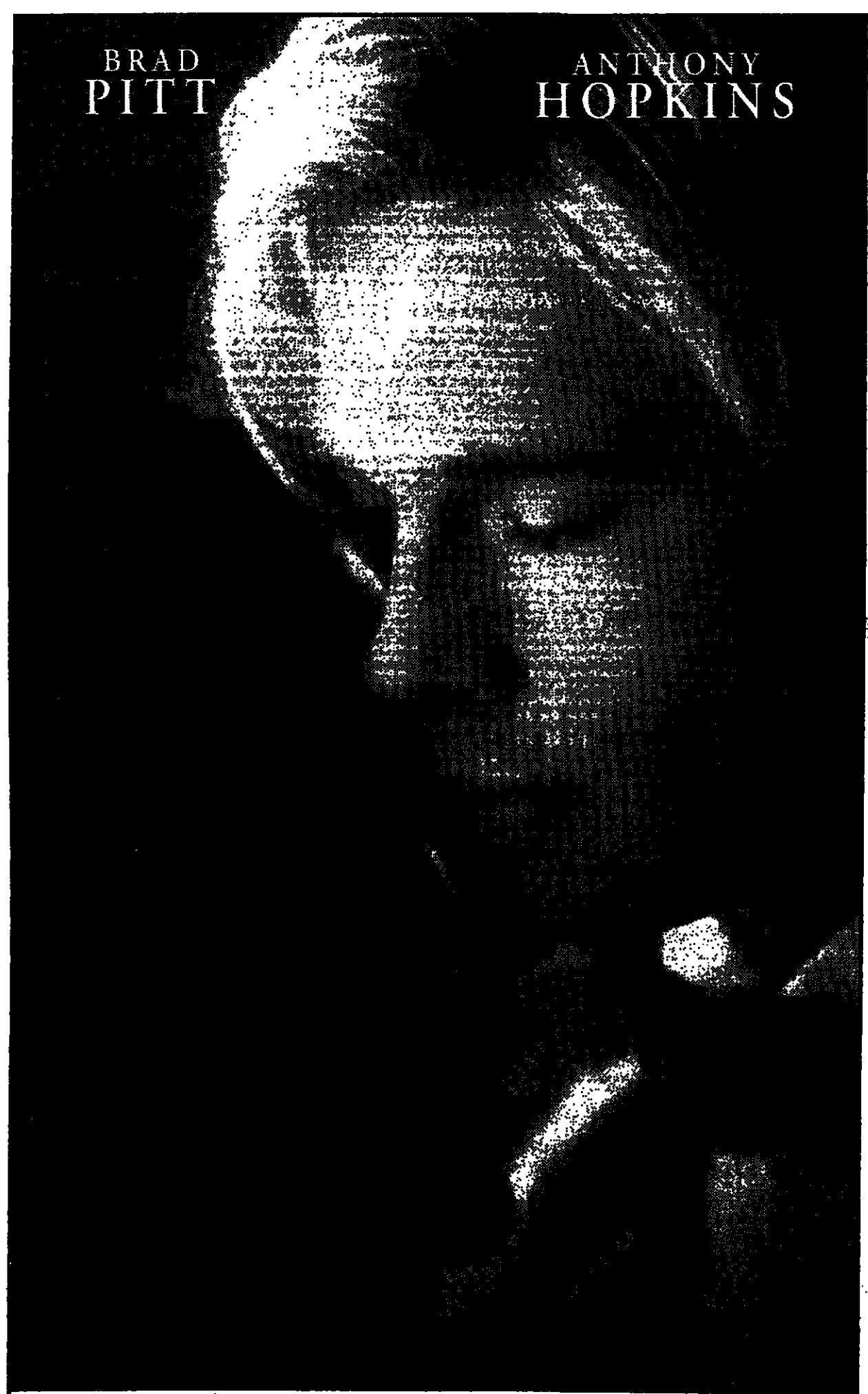
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هكذا من الأهل:

Couple and daughter killed in house fire

Lighted candle on a television set
it thought to have caused blaze
hours after a 21st birthday party

A COUPLE and their daughter died early yesterday when fire swept through the family home hours after a 21st birthday party.

Firefighters found the bodies of Brian Boyle, 50, his wife, Briege Boyle, 48, and their daughter Sasha, 28, when they broke into the house in the village of Roscrea, Co. Down. A second daughter, Marie, a model, whose 21st birthday party had ended just hours earlier, escaped through a skylight and was rescued by neighbours, who raised the alarm.

Firefighters carried another woman aged 41, out of the burning house. She was taken to hospital with smoke inhalation. The firemen also needed hospital treatment.

It was not known what started the fire, which broke out in the living room of the semi-detached bungalow at Roswood Park, on the outskirts of the village. However, police are believed to be investigating the possibility that it may have been caused by a lighted candle on top of a television.

The fire is believed to have started about two hours after the last of the guests, including Marie's grandparents, had left

the house. It quickly spread towards the front door, trapping her parents in an upstairs bedroom and others on the ground floor.

Firemen from neighbouring Warrenpoint used breathing apparatus as they twice battled through the flames to reach the victims. The living room was well alight by the time they arrived. Marie had to be restrained from going back into the house.

The 41-year-old woman rescued from the house was taken to Daisy Hill Hospital, in Newry, where she was being treated in the high dependency unit. A spokesman said she was in a serious but stable condition.

Clara Fearon, who lives opposite the Boyles' house, said: "I was woken by the Boyles' next-door neighbours, who had spotted smoke coming out of the living room. My wife phoned the fire brigade."

"Myself and some of the other neighbours then went round the back of the house, banging on the doors and windows to try and rouse them."

Marie made it out of the skylight window and we managed to coax her off the roof by



Marie Boyle escaped through a skylight

pulling a wheelie bin over for her to climb down on to.

Marie told us her mum and dad were still in the other upstairs bedroom, but we didn't know her sister or anybody else was in the house at the time. I managed to scramble on to the roof and shouted through the skylight window, but the heat and smoke were intense and I had to come down," Mr Fearon said.

Another neighbour, Kieran Killen, said: "We got a couple of garden hoses and trained

them at the windows, but then the whole place just seemed to combust and go up in flames."

John Smyth, a fire station officer, said that the fire was one of the most horrific incidents he had seen. "The ground floor was an inferno. My officers were just going into a wall of flame."

Firefighters, who received the emergency call at 4.20am, carried four people out of the house within minutes, and searched the building twice, he said. However, three of the four were already dead.

"It was obvious there had been a party - the cake was still in the kitchen," Mr Smyth said. "It was a heartbreaking scene. It's the first tragedy of this type in the area for some time and for several of my officers it was the first time they had had to deal with fatalities."

Mr Boyle was said to have been a popular member of Warrenpoint golf club, where the flag flew at half-mast yesterday to mark the tragedy, which has deeply shocked the tight-knit community.

Tony Williamson, an independent councillor and family friend, said that Mrs Boyle suffered a double bereavement just before Christmas, when her two brothers died within a short time of each other. "They were a lovely family, very well known in the area," Mr Williamson said.



Brian and Briege Boyle, who died in the fire with their daughter Sasha

Teacher who hit love rival goes free

BY JOANNA BAILE

A TEACHER who attacked his wife's lover with a metal pipe walked free from court yesterday after he was found guilty of wounding.

Alistair McColl, 37, a craft and design teacher, broke down at Norwich Crown Court when he was told that he would not be jailed.

Judge David Mellor imposed a 12-month conditional discharge on McColl, saying harsher punishment would serve no useful purpose.

The court was told how McColl was devastated when he learnt in May that his wife Cherie, 38, and Colin Breeze, who both teach at Westbourne High School, in Ipswich, were having an affair.

Two weeks after hearing that his wife was probably going to leave and take their two young children, McColl, from Ipswich, drove Mr Breeze to isolated woodland and hit him twice over the head with a length of steel tubing. Mr Breeze needed stitches.

McColl, who is suspended from Copleston High School, Ipswich, denied intending to cause him serious harm. He was cleared of the more serious charge of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. Earlier he had been cleared of attempted murder after the judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence.

'Don't drink and die' ads cut accidents

STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE £million Christmas campaign against drink-driving cut the number of motorists testing positive by 22 per cent and reduced accidents by 5 per cent, police said yesterday.

Figure for the 43 forces in England and Wales show that the fall in the number of motorists testing positive for alcohol in their blood was 22 per cent, from 16,795 in 1997 to 13,081 in 1998. The number of other accidents fell from 6,881 to 6,444.

Drivers were positive in 1,081 cases per cent of tests. In 1997-98 there were 1,430 positive tests representing 9 per cent of samples taken.

The success of the Christmas campaign means that the peak for drink-driving and accidents is now mid-year. Yesterday police and government officials said that a new campaign might be targeted at the summer holiday period. Chief constables also remain convinced of a need for a cut in the drink-driving limit.

The figures do not include the total number of tests carried out over the Christmas period.

Forces adopted different policies, with some chief constables ordering widespread testing while others limited the tests to the scenes of accidents or cases where police suspected an offence.

Announcing the figures Ken Williams, Chief Constable of Norfolk and a senior spokesman for the association, said he thought the campaign had been more powerful than other years. It had helped to reach a hardcore of young drivers in their early 20s. But the police were still concerned at motorists in their 50s who continue to believe they can drink and drive safely. The number of deaths on the road because of drink has stayed at about 540 since 1992 and Mr Williams said more needed to be done to cut this.

He said police wanted to reduce the legal blood alcohol limit from 80mg alcohol in 100ml of blood to 50mg and they awaited a decision from the Government. Mr Williams said seven European countries had moved to 50mg and Spain was about to join them. He said British police did not support a zero level as this was difficult to test because the body could produce small amounts of alcohol naturally.

Leading article, page 23

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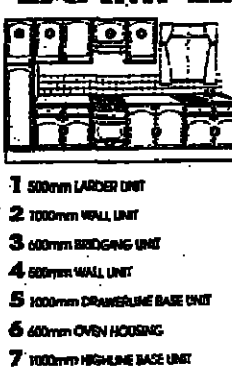
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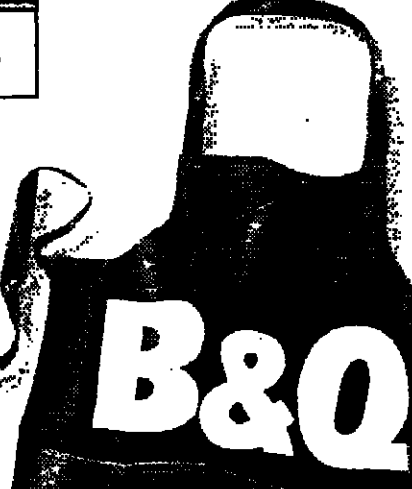
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Little sign of light in Monty's heart of darkness

Michael Binyon examines the prospects of a poor continent scorned by Viscount Montgomery

FIFTY years after Viscount Montgomery of El Alamein's pessimistic forecasts for the future of Africa, the outlook for much of the continent remains bleak.

Fighting rages from Sierra Leone on the west coast, across the vast jungle of the Congo and down a swath of the east coast from south Sudan to Somalia. Incomes have fallen sharply as populations soar and output shrinks.

Health and education systems are struggling to keep going as corruption and mismanagement destroy the institutions put in place by former colonial governments. Aids, starvation and genocide have left many countries more wretched than they were when Montgomery visited them in 1947.

World statistics paint a grim picture. Nearly all international agencies, including the World Bank, the United Nations, development bodies, non-governmental organisations and Western charities, show growth static or negative, life expectancy low, infant mortality high and the gap between rich and poor widening.

Countries such as the Gold Coast and Uganda that faced a bright future on independence and enjoyed incomes that were well above those in many Asian countries were racked by subsequent misrule and saw their standards of living virtually collapse. Only now are they and others such as Mozambique and Ethiopia beginning to recover from years of civil war.

Montgomery believed that the fault lay mainly with Africans who, he said, were incapable of developing their countries themselves. But in many cases it was the colonial rulers who sowed the seeds of the subsequent chaos by failing to train a properly educated cadre to run the newly independent states and then by withdrawing precipitately.

Some colonial rulers — notably the Belgians in the Congo and the Portuguese — were ruthlessly exploitative and repatriated all profits from the extraction of raw materials instead of building up local industry. When they left, they took with them many of the installations needed to run the country.

Africa has also suffered from the volatility of commodity prices. Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana was brought low by the collapse of the cacao market. Zambia's decline was accelerated by falling copper prices. Coffee glutted regularly wiped out investment plans in East Africa.

But the main impediment to growth has been political. Colonial boundaries cut across tribal and ethnic lines; the new

countries' decision not to change them was understandable, but left many with minorities and feuding groups that concentrated their energies on attacking and destroying their tribal enemies.

For decades Rwanda has been terrorised by killings prompted by the enmity between Hutus and Tutsis, culminating in the genocide in 1994 in which up to a million people died; similar ethnic enmity has destabilised Burundi, also a former Belgian colony, which saw its gross domestic product drop by up to 17 per cent in some years.

Tribal instability has been exacerbated by Cold War rivalry. Somalia is a classic example. In the 1970s Soviet influence was strong, with the Soviet Navy seeking port facilities at Mogadishu. The Russians supported the regime of Siad Barre, who launched an attack on neighbouring Ethiopia, that had long been under American influence.

But with the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie and the installation of a Marxist government under Mengistu, Moscow decided to switch

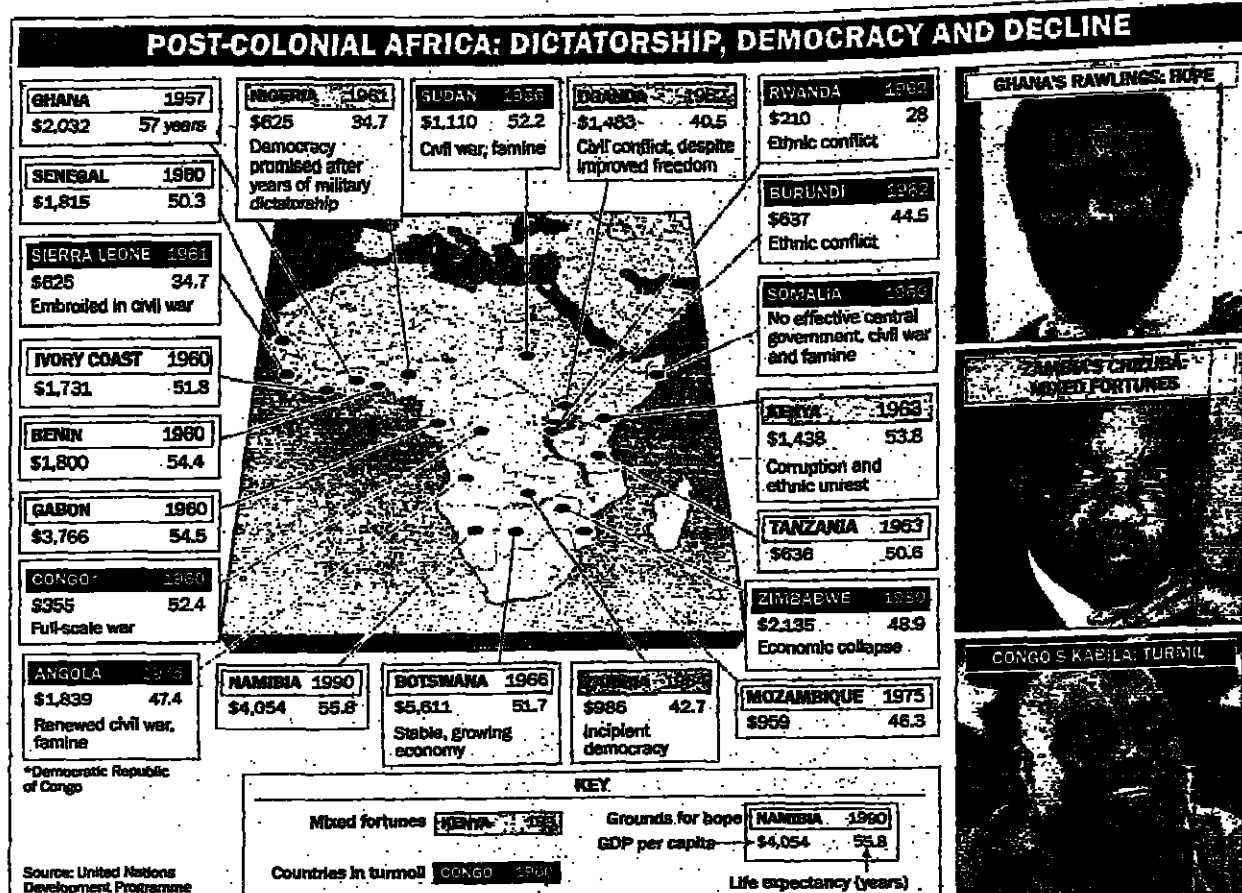
sides. Somalia's Ogaden offensive was thrown back. The subsequent downfall of Barre and the withdrawal of Soviet support led to the political disunity that finally resulted in anarchy and famine, prompting the American intervention in 1992.

Similar disastrous consequences of Cold War rivalry stunted the development of Angola, a mineral-rich country that has seen virtually no peace since the Portuguese left. The Russian attempt to establish a naval base prompted South African — and more discreetly, American — support for the Unita rebels.

That, in turn, led to the intervention of the Cubans. Vast quantities of arms flooded into the country, together with millions of landmines that are still taking their toll. The fighting has been going on so long that a generation knows little else and is ill-educated for the development of the country.

In some cases, the wealth generated under the previous colonial governments has led to instability. Examples are Zimbabwe and Kenya. Nairobi, a prosperous city, attracted vast numbers from the countryside, and a population boom — almost double the birthrate of India — began that far outstripped economic growth. The influx of wealthy tourists has exacerbated the visible gap between rich and poor, which in turn has led to crime, violence and a threat to general prosperity.

In Zimbabwe, the success of largely white-owned agriculture has been viewed with envy by a Government under



pressure to raise general living standards. President Mugabe's attempts to confiscate white farms have had a disastrous effect on the national economy and on international investor confidence.

In several cases the biggest factor has been the criminal greed of the post-independence rulers themselves. Those countries that have seen living standards drop most quickly are those where dictators have plundered their country's wealth, enriching themselves at the expense of national development. Nigeria and the Republic of Congo, formerly Zaïre, are the worst examples of rich countries brought low by kleptocratic rulers.

The tradition of the headman looking after himself and his tribe first has served Africa ill. It has led to tribal favouritism by President Moi in Kenya, discrimination in favour of the Shona tribe in Zimbabwe by President Mugabe and the murderous oppression of Nigeria's Ogoni people and Biafrans.

There are bright spots. Countries that have maintained stability — often with financial and institutional links to former colonial rulers — have done well. In West Africa, Senegal and the Ivory Coast have been comparatively prosperous. Botswana has set such an example of institutional democracy that the Commonwealth recently held a conference there to further democracy in Africa. Tanzania has remained poor, but it has seen political stability and the vol-

untary retirement of its first President, Julius Nyerere. Some institutions in Africa have remained bulwarks against falling standards. The Church has played a visible lead in the fight against disease and corruption. The judiciary in many countries continues to function even amid chaos. In Sierra Leone, where civil war threatens the capital again, the courts recently held

friendly co-operation with the West. That does not guarantee success. Uganda is threatened by fanatics of the Lord's Day Army. Ethiopia and Eritrea recently fought a brief and bizarre desert war over boundary disputes. And the new Government in Rwanda has been drawn into the worsening civil war in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo.

But the 'new' African lead-

crisis Africa's failure to set proper budgets and to accept responsibility for good government. That message as been reinforced by bodiless such as the Commonwealth Africa has absorbed more international aid since independence than any other continent. It also has most of the world's poorest countries, with Sierra Leone coming an abject last, according to the combined indicators of UN re-

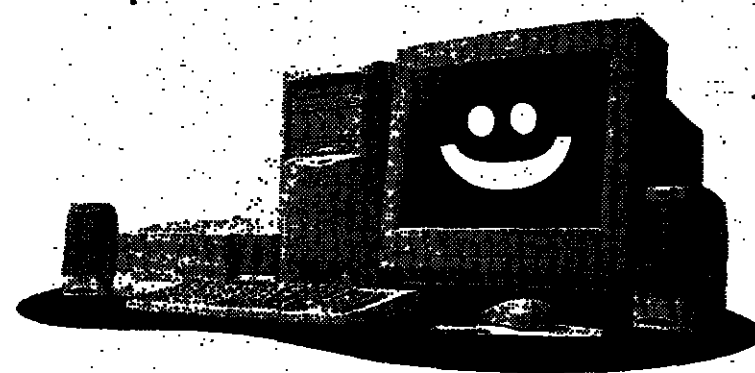
ports.

Montgomery thought that the continent was the Britain's postwar laborer source of cheap labour and of limitless natural commodities. His views were shaped by a tour in the autumn of 1947 that took him to French Morocco, Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Belgium, Congo, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. He believed that prosperity could best be encouraged by creating three huge colonial federations in West Central and East Africa.

His visit to the Old Coast came ten years before that country was the first gain independence. Under Nkrumah, whose extravagance, state socialism and anti-colonial posturing set the pattern for future leaders, the country's wealth disappeared. Montgomery may have foreseen such a decline; he did not see that a former cop leader would then dispel the pessimism and show that country once a byword for its opportunity can recover.

Leading article, page 23

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مركز لاند

Cape Muslims threaten Blair visit

Protesters enraged by Iraq airstrikes vow disruption while leaders strengthen ties, Sam Kiley writes

HUNDREDS of South African Muslims burnt the Union Jack outside the British High Commission in Cape Town yesterday and pledged to disrupt Tony Blair's visit to the "Mother City" after being dispersed with stun grenades and teargas.

Protesting at the American and British airstrikes against Iraq, the demonstrators waved banners and screamed "One Blair, one buller" — an adaptation of the apartheid-era protest slogan "One settler, one buller".

Other placards read "United States, United Kingdom, United Terrorism" and "Blair — Blood on his hands". Armoured trucks were beaten with sticks as police fired teargas and stun grenades to force the crowd away from the High Commission, which stands opposite the South African parliament where Mr Blair is due to speak today.

The group behind the demonstration, Muslims Against Global Oppression, allegedly took responsibility for the bombing of the Planet Hollywood restaurant in Cape Town shortly after the US air raids on Afghanistan and Sudan last year. Two people were killed and five British holidaymakers from the same family were injured in the blast.

The police said yesterday that forensic science experts had found similarities between the Planet Hollywood device and a recent car bomb which injured two people on the Cape Town Waterfront marina on New Year's Day. Members of Mr Blair's entourage will be staying there during the Prime Minister's short visit to the Cape.

"We are not taking any chances at all," a police spokesman said. "There could not be any greater security for Mr Blair's visit."

But yesterday the demonstrators were able to force their way into central Cape Town after being denied permission to march, and burn the Union Jack along with the flags of Israel and the US.

In Johannesburg, meanwhile, Mr Blair gave Thabo Mbeki, his apparent President-elect, a ringing endorsement ahead of elections this year. The Prime Minister backed his belief that South Africa was on the right course with a 40 per cent boost in British aid and a pledge to support South Africa in Europe.

Mr Blair's praise for Mr Mbeki, the Deputy President, and the policies of the ANC

Government, were also aimed at reassuring whites that Mr Mandela's retirement this year will not result in a black backlash and the end of the policy of reconciliation.

"Because of [Mr Mbeki] and his leadership qualities I have great confidence for the future here," Mr Blair said. Their often jocular joint press conference signalled the beginning of a special relationship amid pledges to co-operate closely on solutions to African conflicts as well as Iraq.

In recent speeches, Mr Mbeki has emphasised the vast gap in the average incomes of black and white South Africans, and given a warning of a growing "rage" among blacks that this has not been closed five years after the end of white rule.

Mr Blair announced an extra £50 million in aid to help bridge the gaps between basic services to the races. "The new Government has made huge strides since 1994. But transformation is far from complete. Britain is committed to strengthening its support for South Africa's efforts to overcome the legacy of apartheid," he said. "We have done this because we believe it is a good investment for the future."

The Prime Minister added that he thought the Government was "taking the right measures" to combat the problem of spiralling crime. Few South Africans would agree. As Mr Blair spoke, and hours before he was due to visit a women's support group in the impoverished black township of Alexandra, news of a double rape and murder was being broadcast.

Later in Alexandra, on the outskirts of Johannesburg, Mr Blair announced £2 million in financial support for programmes aimed at preventing violence against women. South Africa experiences high levels of physical and sexual abuse of women, and has the world's highest rate of reported rape.

The two leaders also discussed talks between the European Union and South Africa on a free-trade agreement. But Mr Blair was not able to persuade Mr Mbeki to sign a deal worth billions of pounds to South Africa. Agreement has been held-up over Pretoria's insistence that domestically produced sherry and port should be marketed in Europe as such. European commissioners have insisted that these products must be marketed as "fortified wines" in line with EU laws.

British miner dies in Angola ambush

By SAM KILEY

A BRITISH miner and three others have been killed in an ambush in Angola's diamond-rich Lunda Norte province amid speculation that the rebel Unita movement is holding up to 18 Western hostages after other attacks on mines and the shooting down of United Nations aircraft.

The Briton, Patrick Bergin, a Brazilian colleague and two Angolan guards were killed when their vehicle was ambushed about four miles from their base at Luzamba in what was believed by their employer, Ashton Mining of Australia, to be a Unita attack. Banditry is commonplace, however, in an area rich in diamonds.

The attack is the second on a mine in which Britons have been killed or abducted, allegedly by Dr Jonas Savimbi's Unita. Last month a British manager and several workers

were killed, and four men including Jason Pope, 26, a British engineer, were taken hostage, in a Unita attack on a mine owned by Diamond Works. The company had had close links to a South African company that once supplied troops for Angolan government forces fighting Unita.

Nothing has been heard of the hostages since Mr Pope contacted his employers by two-way radio. They said he was being "used as a pack animal" by the fighters to carry goods looted from the mine. According to sources in Luanda, the Angolan capital, there is evidence that some or all of the 14 passengers on the first UN aircraft shot down just before the new year may have been captured by Unita, which used Western hostages to attract publicity for its movement during the 1980s.



Tony Blair meets street children yesterday in the impoverished township of Alexandra, north of Johannesburg. He visits Cape Town today

Limited truce in Sierra Leone

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

SIERRA Leone's President Kabbah and the jailed rebel leader Foday Sankoh were reported to have agreed a week-long ceasefire yesterday after a day of fighting in the country's capital, Freetown. The President said the truce would allow for talks.

Earlier, fighting raged across the capital as West African troops launched a counter-attack to stem the day-old rebel advance.

Residents covered in buildings as shooting continued between the Nigerian-led Ecomog intervention force and the Revolutionary United Front, the rebel group that has joined forces with the ousted junta and defectors from the Sierra Leone Army.

Britain yesterday accused Liberia of helping the rebels and called on President Taylor to stop direct aid. Sam Bockarie, the rebel leader, said his forces would stop fighting if Sankoh was freed. President Kabbah said that could happen within a week.

THE SUNDAY TIMES



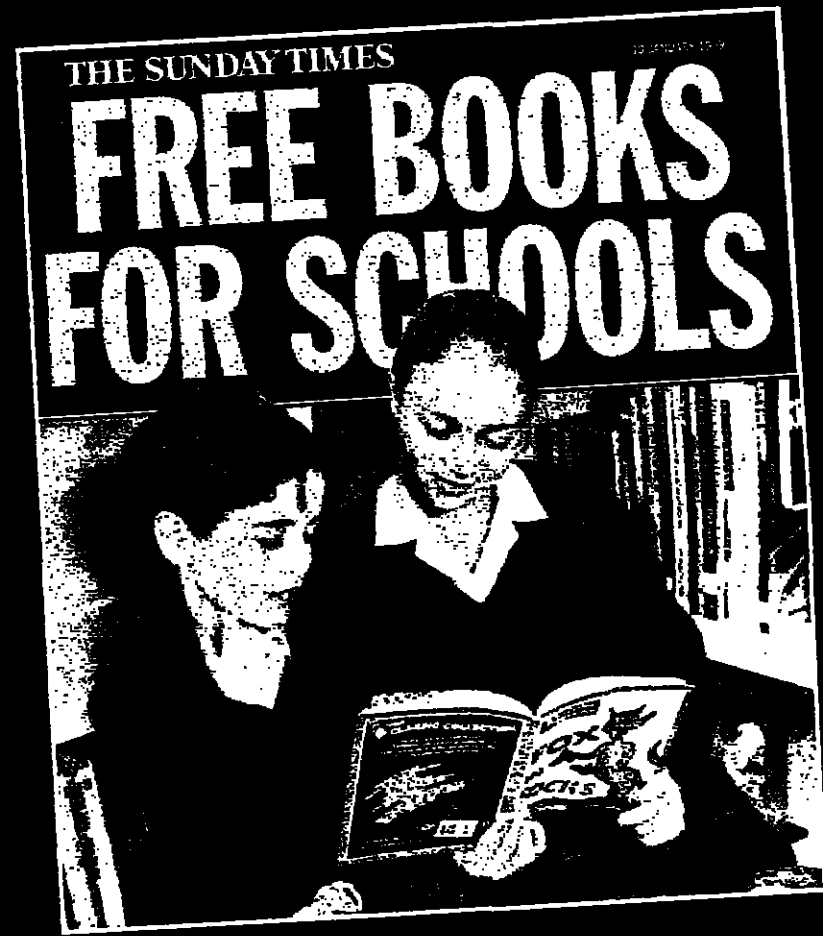
STYLE

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Iraq inspectors were US spies

AMERICAN officials, reacting to leaks from senior United Nations officials, confirmed Iraq's long-standing suspicions that US spies worked under cover as UN weapons inspectors to gather intelligence about the Iraqi regime.

Despite official denials, American sources were quoted as saying that US intelligence officers had served on UN inspection teams using diplomatic cover or other professional identities to collect information for the United States.

The UN teams are said to have installed a "black box" eavesdropping system in Iraq last year that intercepted President Saddam Hussein's presidential communications network and fed the information via US satellite to the National Security Agency.

Analysts sifted through tens of thousands of hours of intercepted conversations before relaying relevant information to the UN Special Commission (Unscm) for use by the inspectors.

The operation, known as "Shake the Tree", was designed to penetrate the "concealment mechanism" by which Iraq's intelligence agencies and elite military units

UN leak confirms

Saddam's claims,

writes James Bone

in New York

hid proscribed weapons components and documents from UN inspectors. But the same security network, run by a presidential secretary who is an elder in Saddam's Tikriti clan, was also responsible for the Iraqi leader's personal security and the operation gave American insight into his movements.

US officials said that some of the intelligence was used in last month's four-day bombing campaign, which targeted the inner circle responsible for concealing Iraq's mass-destruction weapons.

Iraqi officials about the disclosures, which originally were leaked to the press by aides to Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, who feared that the United States was abusing Unscm. "We have here under the hat of the United Nations, spies and CIA people," Hu-

mam Abdul-Khaleq, Iraq's Minister of Culture and Information, said. Khalid al-Saeedi, chairman of the human rights committee of the Iraqi parliament, said the disclosures should bolster Iraq's credibility.

Senior American officials were said to be furious with Mr Annan for allowing his aides to make public a US intelligence operation that apparently is still under way. But there has been a widening divergence between Washington and the UN since the Clinton Administration announced a policy of overthrowing Saddam, a move that put it at odds with the Security Council's stated goals in Iraq.

Diplomats predicted that the confirmation of an American spying operation would only undermine Unscm and Richard Butler, its Australian head, who is under increasing pressure to resign.

Iraq defied the Western-imposed no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq again yesterday. A US F16 fighter fired on an air-defence installation in the northern zone after the pilot found that he was about to be targeted by a surface-to-air missile.



Rebels keeping vigil yesterday as President Pastrana of Colombia waited to start talks with the leader of the country's largest left-wing guerrilla group on measures to end the 40-year civil war. Hundreds of international observers, human rights activists and Colombian politicians con-

Colombia rebels join talks

verged on San Vicente del Caguan, a remote jungle town, hoping to witness an unprecedented handshake between the recently elected Conservative Party President and Manuel Marulanda

(Gabriella Gamini writes). But the legendary leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) failed to emerge from his mountain hideout. The veteran guerrilla leader, who

commands 15,000 armed rebels who control most of rural Colombia, has not appeared in public for 40 years. A middle-ranking rebel commander, Joaquin Gomez, spoke in his place. It was not clear last night whether the talks will succeed in moving on from the initial contact.

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WALKERS

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CHANGING TIMES

WORLD IN BRIEF

Patriarch exhorts Serbs to multiply

Belgrade: Patriarch Pavle, Serbia's Orthodox leader, has reminded the nation that the struggle for Kosovo, where Albanians outnumber Serbs by nine to one, will be decided as much by demographics as by bullets (Tom Walker writes). In his sermon to the nation on Wednesday night, the Orthodox Christmas Eve, he said: "Who has the most sheep in the field, that is his field." If the message had been too oblique for some, he then added: "Multiply yourselves."

The frail 85-year-old is no stranger to controversy. Two years ago he spent his Christmas standing between riot police and students demonstrating against the regime of President Milosevic. By raising the issue of Serbia's declining birth rate, he again runs the risk of falling foul of a government determined to bury the issue of the dwindling number of Serbs in the country's southern province.

Polar venture called off

Sydney: Atrocious weather conditions have forced three adventurers to abandon their quest to retrace the footsteps of the explorer, Robert Scott, 87 years after his fatal expedition to the South Pole and back, organisers said. The team, led by Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund Hillary, the Everest conqueror, had been tent-bound since Sunday in temperatures of -30C (-22F) and winds gusting at 30 to 50 knots. Snowdrifts of more than 6ft and visibility of just 16ft have put the team three weeks behind schedule. They will continue to the South Pole, but will then be airlifted back to Scott Base. (AFP)

New Cabinet in Turkey

Istanbul: Turkey is expected to emerge from six weeks of political stalemate as Bulent Ecevit, right, submits a Cabinet for approval today (Andrew Finkel writes). The Government, the sixth in the lifetime of the present parliament, seems likely to win a confidence vote next week, but is unlikely to accomplish more than to lead the country into a general and local elections planned for April 18. Mr Ecevit's Democratic Left party will lead a minority administration.



Israel seminaries 'fake'

Jerusalem: Police are investigating claims that the Religious Affairs Ministry has funnelled millions of pounds to fictitious seminaries. "We received information from the Finance Ministry and the police that led us to suspect that some of the religious seminaries we have been giving money to did not exist," said Shimon Malka, a spokesman. He said the seminaries' accountants were summoned "and we became suspicious when some failed to appear". The ministry's director-general, Avi Blaustein, told Haaretz that £10 million a year was being siphoned off. (AFP)

Wife shortage in China

Shanghai: The gender imbalance in China's population is worsening, according to a government think-tank, which says the male-female ratio is 120-100. According to Business Weekly, figures from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing indicate that one in six males - 111 million - cannot hope to find a wife. A longstanding bias in favour of male offspring has taken a harsh toll, combined with the country's one-child policy. Overseas women's groups say there has been a massive upsurge in female infanticide. China's population is over 1.22 billion. (AFP)

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Police chief quits over Anwar attack

FROM NELSON GRAVES
IN KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA'S police chief resigned yesterday after taking full responsibility for injuries inflicted on Anwar Ibrahim, the former Finance Minister, while he was in police custody three months ago.

But the country's Opposition leader and a human rights group said the resignation should not stop authorities from identifying those responsible for the violence.

They want Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister, to apologise for having suggested that Mr Anwar's injuries could have been self-inflicted and have asked him and the attorney-general to quit.

Abdul Rahim Noor, the Inspector-General of Police, bowed to public indignation when Mr Anwar appeared in court in September with a black eye and bruises on his neck and hands.

He said he had been beaten while in custody. The outcry



Rahim Noor: he took full blame for jail injuries

grew until a statement by the attorney-general on Tuesday pinned the blame for Mr Anwar's injuries on the police.

"I, as the Inspector-General of the Royal Malaysia Police, assume full responsibility," Mr Rahim Noor said in his resignation statement.

"I have therefore taken a decision to terminate my service as the Inspector-General of Po-

lice with effect from tomorrow."

Mr Rahim Noor became the first official to resign since the Prime Minister dismissed Mr Anwar in early September, exposing a split in Malaysia's dominant political party.

It was not clear whether the police chief's departure would end the controversy over police treatment of Mr Anwar, who until his dismissal was prime-minister-in-waiting and now is standing trial on sex and corruption charges.

Opposition leaders and rights activists have accused the attorney-general of keeping the public in the dark over Mr Anwar's injuries and called for him to step down as well.

"Public confidence would suffer another grievous blow if Malaysians and the international community are made to feel that Rahim Noor's resignation is just an excuse for a cover-up and the ending of all investigations into the police beatings of Anwar while in police custody," Lim Kit Siang,

the parliamentary Opposition leader, said. The rights group Suaram said the attorney-general should resign for delaying and suppressing the report on Mr Anwar's beating.

"Suaram reiterates calls for Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad as the Home Minister to apologise publicly for misleading the Malaysian people, and to assume full responsibility by tendering his immediate resignation," it said.

The president of the Aliran rights group, P. Ramakrishnan, last night called on Dr Mahathir and the attorney-general to resign unless "those responsible for assaulting Anwar" were identified by the end of the month.

In a rare breaking of ranks, a component party in Dr Mahathir's governing coalition also criticised the delay in identifying the person or persons who injured Mr Anwar.

Dr Mahathir has said that he would consider public demands for an independent inquiry into Mr Anwar's injuries. (Reuters)



A machete-wielding youth chases another during riots in Jakarta yesterday. Police fired plastic bullets at hundreds of stone-throwing protesters in the Indonesian capital's Matraman area. Three

Youths riot in Jakarta

rioters and one police officer were injured in the clashes, which broke out when the officers tried to disperse braw-

ling gangs and students. Three police motorcycles were burnt. The rioters later dispersed and anti-riot

squads patrolled the area in trucks. Gang brawls are common in Jakarta, but the authorities are concerned about rising lawlessness after a year marked by persistent unrest. (AP)

Roman claim to Paris galls the French

Conquering invaders founded the capital, writes Ben Macintyre

THE long-held belief that Paris was built on the site of an ancient settlement of Gauls has been exploded by a French archaeologist, who says the future French capital was founded from scratch by the invading Romans.

French historians have long adhered to the idea that the Roman city Lutetia, which became Paris, was built on top of a Gallic oppidum, or fortified

town, of the Parisii tribe of Gauls. Thus, it could be argued that while the Roman conquerors developed what would eventually become Paris, the locals got there first.

In a new 600-page study of the city's origins, however, Didier Buisson, a historian, argues that archaeological evidence indicates that Lutetia was a purpose-built Roman town with no indigenous roots, built out from the summit of the hill of Saint-Geneviève, on the Left Bank.

M. Buisson, an archaeologist at the Ancient Paris Commission who has spent seven years researching his book, Paris, points out that almost no Celtic remains have ever been discovered beneath the city, let alone evidence to suggest a thriving Gallic settlement.

Over the years, archaeologists have found only the foundations of a hut, apparently more likely to be prehistoric than Celtic, some Gallic coins and a few agricultural tools.

Lutetia was founded around 48BC, some 48 years after the Roman conquest. "What happened here between 52BC and 48BC?" M. Buisson asks. "Apparently, nothing. Under the Roman level, you can't find anything earlier. The Lutetia of 48BC was not a refoundation but a foundation, pure and simple."

A contemporary account described an oppidum of the Parisii on a bend or island in the river Sequana (the Seine), and French historians have long assumed, as a matter of national pride, that this was on the Ile de la Cité in the heart of Paris. But the only remains found on the island date from the Gallo-Roman period and not earlier — again undermining the national myth surrounding the city's earliest days.

"This is a major blow to received ideas," declared Le Figaro newspaper. "But even M. Buisson has avoided pointing out the most embarrassing conclusion to be drawn from his research: if Lutetia was not built by the Romans on an ancient fort of the Parisii, it should never have been named Paris."



Caesar: many believe he founded the city

Italians gleeful

ITALIANS who take pride in their glory of ancient times reacted with delight yesterday to reports of the Roman origins of Paris.

"The Roman Empire, in 48BC, was Augustus, who replaced from 27BC to AD14, the succeeded Julius Caesar, who conquered Gaul in 51BC and is considered by many scholars to be the real founder of Paris."

Caesar's Commentaries record that Celtic tribesmen in settlements on the Seine had gold coins, and that they burnt their dwellings rather than surrender.

"If Messengers noted that since the excavations had revealed only Roman foundations, history would have to be rewritten."

'Militarised' Knesset worries the voters

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

WITH three former army chiefs of staff already declared candidates for the post of Prime Minister in the election on May 17, concern is growing among many Israelis that the nation's predilection for political leaders with a military past has gone too far.

On Wednesday Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, leader of a new centre party, threw his hat into the ring less than a month after leaving the forces. He joined Ehud Barak, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, who left the top army post in 1994, and Rafael Eitan, founder of the hardline

Tsomet Party, who entered politics in 1984.

"We are militarising politics and politicising the military," said Avich Carmon, head of the Hebrew University's Institute for Democracy. Of the large number of military candidates, he said: "They are good people, but I am worried."

Yuri Stern, a Knesset backbencher likely to join a new Russian immigrant party, "Israel, Our Home", said yesterday: "The public is getting tired of officers going into politics. They do not necessarily have the goods for the job."

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If you're one of those people who don't visit the January sales, you should, because then you'll be able to witness at first hand the dramatic discounts that make it affordable for many of your colleagues to dress in a way that makes them look as soigné as Elvis just before he popped his final double-cheeseburger.

The people who shop in Versace and Gucci all year round aren't worried about price tags. If they had thought that lemon and magenta pashmina hotpants were cool, they'd have bought some. The reason they are in the sale at £18.40 below their original price is that nobody wanted them except Elton John, who uses them as novelty lens cloths for his spectacles.

When bargain hunters realise they've made this kind of mistake, they hide behind the excuse that, well, of course they're aware that

they look ridiculous, but these happen to be lucky hotpants. (You: "You look ridiculous in those pashmina hotpants." Michael: "I know, but they always bring me luck, and I'm going for an interview this afternoon at the Treasury for Charlie Whelan's old job as Gordon Brown's press secretary.")

What these people haven't yet grasped is that sales are a sting operation, just like in that film with Robert Redford and Paul Newman. They aim to suck in the unwary punter. As Marx said — check before using this in your A-level economics exam — capitalism survives by adapting. Given the scale of overproduction today, capitalism makes ends meet by off-loading all its surplus products over a fortnight in January at their true market value: to be able to pull this trick off, it pretends to sell these same goods at three times

their true worth for the remaining 50 weeks of the year.

To help the sting along, stores actually pump a chemical into their air-conditioning system at sale time which induces you to buy, in bulk, items that you'd never dream of buying at all during the rest of the year. "Look, there's that Xylotex Protein shampoo, the shampoo that 'repairs your hair because it cares', but also makes it smell like a Boy Scout's sleeping bag. Hang on, they're giving away 50 per cent extra free. Now that's a bargain."

So now you're lugging home a carrier containing 50 per cent more of a hair product you never even use. At other times you're tricked into buying things you do use all year, such as shoes — only if it weren't for the sale discounts, you'd make do with the shoes you already own. But then you make the mistake of wearing your new shoes

straight away, and because it's January and it's raining, they acquire that mysterious 'white tide-mark' above the welt that is impossible to remove, except maybe with NASA-developed technology.

The easiest remedy is to throw away the shoes and buy a fresh pair in the next sale. This is the retail equivalent of perpetual motion, a cycle which was activated by the flawed decision to make shoes out of leather in the first place. Cows are covered in leather, except for one bit: their feet. If even cows think that leather doesn't stand up to footwear material, maybe we should all listen.

The downside of funnelling so much fill-ringing into a fortnight is that stores quickly fill with shoppers who haven't got out much for the past 50 weeks. These are people who are determined to exploit

this rare opportunity to converse with sales assistants by imparting their life story ("The computer's for my son, Jack. He's 12 now. He's got a computer already, but he was using his cousin's Apple last weekend — an iMac was it? — and he noticed that..."). It's like overhearing that intimate conversation people have after they've just gone to bed with someone for the first time and feel they must confide every detail of their life to their new partner before dawn breaks. This shopper is invariably one place ahead of you in the queue at John Lewis.

But Adam Smith would recognise this sale-time frenzy, along with the emergence from retail hibernation of those life-story-tellers, as merely further proof of the market's invisible hand at work — because their effect is to make millions of us willing to pay three times what something is truly

worth, purely for the privilege of being able to buy it during the 50 non-sale weeks a year when there are fewer other shoppers around.

It is precisely to avoid the January crush that I'm waiting until next month to return a shirt I got for Christmas. It shrank after I cleaned it in the bargain washing machine I bought in last January's sales, a machine manufactured in a country where underpaid workers like to wreak revenge on rich Westerners by mislabelling the dial on the wash programme with the result that switching on a wash triggers as random an outcome as pulling the arm of a fruit machine.

In the meantime, I'll just have to wear the shirt as it is, and, if people snigger at the snug fit, I'll just explain about my washing machine. "I'd get rid of the damn thing," I'll tell them, "only it happens to be a lucky washing machine."

Square-bashing the gays

Calum McLean says he was 'treated like a dog' and suffered verbal rape in the Navy because he was gay. Now he and other victims are challenging the Armed Forces. Vanora Bennett investigates

Perhaps you believed that the Thought Police existed only in the dark, imaginary Britain of 1984. But Calum McLean, arrested and interrogated in this country in 1994 on suspicion of thinking subversive homosexual thoughts, sees things differently.

McLean was serving as a medical assistant in the Royal Navy, which bans homosexuality. He was 20, and just beginning to ask himself the questions about his orientation that hadn't occurred to him when he joined up at 17. Snooping through his room, his flatmates found a pile of gay magazines and reported him to the authorities. The questioning that followed his detainment started a chain of events that led to a second arrest, discharge from the forces, a period of mental illness and a suicide attempt.

"They were like a terrier, refusing to give up," he says. "But there was no reason. There was nothing wrong with my work. I didn't commit any offence on base, never had sex on base. At that point my being gay was only a state of mind."

Now McLean is one of more than 60 sacked homosexual ex-Service staff who, organised by activist groups, will be taking the Ministry of Defence on in court. They want compensation. But mostly, they say, they want justice.

"I feel I should be compensated. They treated me like a dog. I want something back in order to start building my life up again," says McLean. "Since my discharge I've just floated around for four years. This will put a lot of devils to rest."

The gay activists' ultimate aim is to overturn the forces' ban on employing people of "homosexual orientation", those who think gay thoughts even if, in daily life, they consciously avoid all sexual contact so as to keep jobs they love.

Activists say dropping the ban would bring our war machine up to date. Many Nato

countries' forces, they note, put restrictions on homosexual and heterosexual activity on base, but deem troops' sexual thoughts and off-base life private. Gay rights groups see the British regulation as old-fashioned and irrelevant in a liberal country whose government includes openly gay officials.

"We have women in the front line now, so relationships are inevitable. With women there are clear rules on sexual behaviour and how relationships should be conducted: discreet, off base, off duty," says Duncan Lustig-Prean, the spokesman for the gays-from-the-military group Rank Outsiders. "If it's like that, it's not an issue I'd need to act on as a commander."

"But if a couple are sneaking off to have sex in an office or whatever, the rules are clear. You move one partner on. If people misbehave, they should be disciplined. We don't think there should be some weird sexual libertarianism in the Army. And I would fully support quite stern action if there was any homosexual activity of that kind."

Lifting the ban altogether is a long-term goal, but the activists' first target is to win acceptance of their claim that the lengthy and humiliating interrogations to which suspected homosexuals are subjected are sexual harassment. So, they say, were the arrests of several of the group when homosexuality in the services was still considered a crime. (Being of homosexual orientation, while decriminalised in 1994, is still grounds for administrative discharge.)

"I had a hellish interrogation," McLean recalls. "It was like verbal rape."

Lustig-Prean says the way gays and lesbians are interviewed — bombarded with hostile demands for details of their sexual preferences — is cruel. Suicidal thoughts are common among those discharged.

"The ministry has always argued that it's very easy to leave the forces by simply saying that you're gay. To establish that you're not pulling a fast one, they say they need to ask these questions. But it doesn't

wash," he says. "If they've already got the information about your being gay, you can be discharged. They don't need to ask such things as whether you are the active or passive partner. The way this policy is enacted is unjust and cruel."

Lustig-Prean says the Services lose between 100 and 200 people a year because of their homosexuality. Although he estimates that it costs taxpayers £50 million a year to enforce the ban — including the expenses of surveillance, administration and wasted training — MoD officials say losses are tiny. The total services intake is 25,000 recruits a year.

As far as the MoD is concerned, the ban makes sense for practical reasons and is not a moral judgment.

"To have people with homosexual orientation serving would undermine combat effectiveness," says an MoD spokesman, Tim Watkinson. "With imposed communal living in single-sex accommodation, under stress and under fire, it could cause unease, cause relationships to become polarised and undermine efficiency."

After all, officials say, the ban is not a secret. Recruits are told about it at the start and cannot claim to be surprised if it is later applied to them.

But most recruits are taken on as teenagers. Like Calum McLean, they may become aware only gradually that they are gay. And if they do start worrying about it once they are serving, they will find few people to confide in inside the military world.

Nowadays, says Watkinson, people in the Services are encouraged to discuss any possible homosexual feelings with a commanding officer, military doctor, chaplain or welfare officer. "It's dealt with as discreetly and sensitively as possible, a chat with the commanding officer, no police or anything like that," he says. But because these officials are in the military chain of command, they are duty-bound to report any subordinate's possible homosexual inclination. This leads to removal from work — not an option likely to



Calum McLean, discharged from the Royal Navy for being gay: "There was nothing wrong with my work and I didn't commit any offence on base"

encourage a soldier or sailor who is unsure of his feelings. In a tacit admission that something more is needed, confidential telephone helplines became available in 1996. But the principle of guidance from inside the Armed Forces remains, as Watkinson says, that "we would advise people to think carefully through their sexuality. If they turned out to be homosexual, they'd be asked to go."

Activists' earlier attempts to challenge employers' rights to dismiss staff for their sexual orientation have failed in British courts. This time around, at an industrial tribunal in Croydon, South London, they will be forced to shift their ground.

At the tribunal, Rank Outsiders and the gay lobby group Stonewall are claiming sexual harassment — a lesser complaint about the manner

in which their clients were dismissed, rather than a look at the principle for which they were dismissed. All they can achieve from this case is compensation, although they hope that victory would then lead to more attempts to lift the ban altogether when it next comes up for review, in 2001.

In a sign that the tide may be turning in their favour, the tribunal has ordered the MoD to hand over tapes of interviews with five dozen former servicemen and women thrown out because of their sexuality. "We are pleased the MoD has been forced to back down," Stonewall's executive director, Angela Mason, said after the December hearing.

Jean Gould, of the Birmingham solicitors Tyndens, which is handling many of the cases, says cautiously: "There's an expectation that

the political climate is such that there will be change."

Britain's Armed Forces have always prided themselves on living by tougher rules than the rest of society. But tolerance may be more widespread in the ranks than senior officers think, says McLean. After news of his second arrest and

24-hour bout of interrogation were leaked around his base at Prestwick, in Scotland, McLean says he was "terrified" to go back to the corridor of "cheifs, known in the Royal Navy for hard drinking and hard fighting" where he lived. "But they couldn't have been more supportive. They knew I

did my job properly and was a professional. It's unbelievable," they all said, "it's unfair. If it wasn't for the lads, it would have been much worse to be discharged. For me, that blows out of the water the MoD's argument about the boys on the ground not liking to have homosexuals about."

THE TIMES
FREE BOOKS SCHOOLS

A. S. Byatt on growing up with books

When I was young the life I read about in books was far more exciting than real life. I didn't like books about children, I didn't like books pandering to me. I don't like multicultural books about housing estates and milk cartons which try and impose an adult mindset onto children. Children want strange adventures. If you want pirates you should have pirates and if you want dinosaurs and genies and dragons then you should have them.

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CUTTING EDGE

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Just looking, thanks

There is supposed to come a moment in every woman's life — you might call it the onset of middle age. I suppose — when her interest in buying pretty things for herself is overtaken by her interest in buying pretty things for the house. When given the choice between a Fendi croissant bag and a cherrywood secretaire from The Conran Shop, she chooses the secretaire without a pang. For some reason this moment has yet to overtake me. It is true that my interest in majolica and rustic French armchairs is

keener than it was a decade ago, but my love affair with clothes shows no sign of cooling. The effect on the pocketbook, particularly at sales time, is catastrophic.

This year I gave myself a stern briefing about my conduct during the great bargain hunt. No More Clothes, was the gist of it. Nothing but sensible household items, such as china, to boost the chipped selection of mismatches to which my butter-fingered washing up has reduced us; a new throw for the drawing-room sofa and a great many dreary plain white sheets. Just think, I said to myself, how much nicer it will be not to have to bite and scratch your way along the fashion thoroughfares of Knightsbridge and Bond Street, how grown up you will feel as not having to struggle, red-faced, into some unsuitable garment in a smelly communal changing room; how mature not to be joining the sad queue of wannabes outside Gucci (particularly since the whole point of Gucci is that it has to be this season's).

I can't say my inner Shopper was convinced. I set off anyway, mind firmly turned towards crockery, and found

some at Jerry's Home Stores in Fulham Road, where creamy plates and bowls, scattered with dark blue stars, are reduced by about half — £6 (£11.95) for a plate, £4 (£8.95) for a bowl. At The Conran Shop, cream earthenware, pretty handpainted with little black leaves and red roses, is £8.50 (£12.95) for a large plate and £9.50 (£14.95) for a breakfast cup. Cobalt blue coffee cups, handpainted with gold stars, are £3.75 (£7.50), and silver metal spoons and forks, amusingly embossed with tiny spoon and fork motifs, are £3.50.

If you can bear to think about buying presents, Conran is the ideal place to stock up. A semi-circular leather-bound notebook is £12.50

(£19), a large photograph album with a hinged aluminium cover £26.50 (£39.95), Mandarin and neroli body lotion in a frosted glass bottle is £13 (£19.95), and crocheted string bags in vivid colours — lime, cornflower, mandarin orange — with circular metal handles are £6.50 (£9.95). Gardeners will snap up the frosted glass flowerpots £4.50 (£6.95), the multipocketed burlap apron, £5 (£7.50), and the beautiful Victorian glass bell clothes, £19.50 (£29.95), while label-conscious children will want boxes of mini candy canes, £1.50, cotton pique pyjamas, with a giraffe applique, £16.50 (£24.95), and an adorable doll's tea service in a little wooden crate £13.50 (£20).

Wondering what had happened to the reported frenzy of bargain hunters — Brompton Road was almost deserted, except for Chris Evans and a gaggle of gawping country — I made my way to the South House, where a steady stream of customers blankets £247 (£400) and pastel mohair throwers £49.95 (£85), and then to Harvey Nichols, where Ken Turner's



My love affair with clothes shows no sign of cooling. The effect on the pocketbook, particularly at sales time, is catastrophic

clove-cinnamon-scented candles in silver metal bowls are £31.50 (£45).

Sailing down the escalator, eyes rigidly to the front to avoid the temptation of the fashion floors, I caught sight of Joan Collins, magnificent in pale velvet boots and a baby pink Argyle turtleneck. She swept into the Alberta Ferretti concession, plucked a frock from the rail, wrinkled her wonderfully preserved nose and swept out again in the direction of

Givenchy, where I, hot on her trail, was brought to a halt by the most beautiful coat I have ever seen — black wool, embroidered all over with maple leaves, £780 (£1,560). I wanted it more than I've ever wanted anything (except a house in Chelsea and a fox terrier). I didn't buy it, though. And in the course of that afternoon I also didn't buy an embroidered tweed shift by D&G, £70 (£140), a cashmere and silk jersey dress by Jasper Conran, £175 (£350), a floor-length silver sheepskin coat by Nicole Farhi, £900 (£1,800), and a grey hooded cashmere top with satin cuffs by Amanda Wakeley, £208 (£297).

Then I went to Joseph and didn't buy a pale grey cashmere and silk shawl edged with crystal beads, £163 (£245), a sky blue chiffon skirt with white beaded snowflakes by Matthew Williamson, £290 (£435), and a fluffy white lamb-skin jacket, £433 (£649). At Voyage (where I don't suppose they would have let me in anyway) and Georgina von Etzdorf, I resisted reductions of 40 per cent, although I badly want one of von Etzdorf's velvet dresses (originally £450). I didn't even buy a fine wool-mix cardigan at Laura Ashley, £15 (£30), although I ought to have done. I feel a hard winter coming on and they are prettier than woolly vests.

In Russell & Bromley I spurned a pair of gold kid flip-flops, £49 (£79.99), and a black satin mule with a silver kitten heel, £79 (£115). But in Fenwick, slightly unbitten by my prodigies of self-denial, I unaccountably purchased a black Sun & Sand T-shirt with a strip of glittery silver barbed wire across the front, £15 (£29). I can't think what got into me. Next thing I know I'll be calling Cher and asking for her dressmaker's number.

It was an heroic effort, all that non-shopping, I can tell you. But it's not over yet. The Manolo Blahnik sale begins today. And if I go, as I dare say I shall, having attended every sale in the past decade, I know what will happen. A mysterious force, like the one that spirals the ruby slippers on to Dorothy's feet in *The Wizard of Oz*, will divest me of my stout walking boots and replace them with a spindly pair of gold kid mules. And a bit later I shall watch helplessly as my hand writes out, all by itself, the cheque that would have kept me in plain white cotton sheets until 2100.

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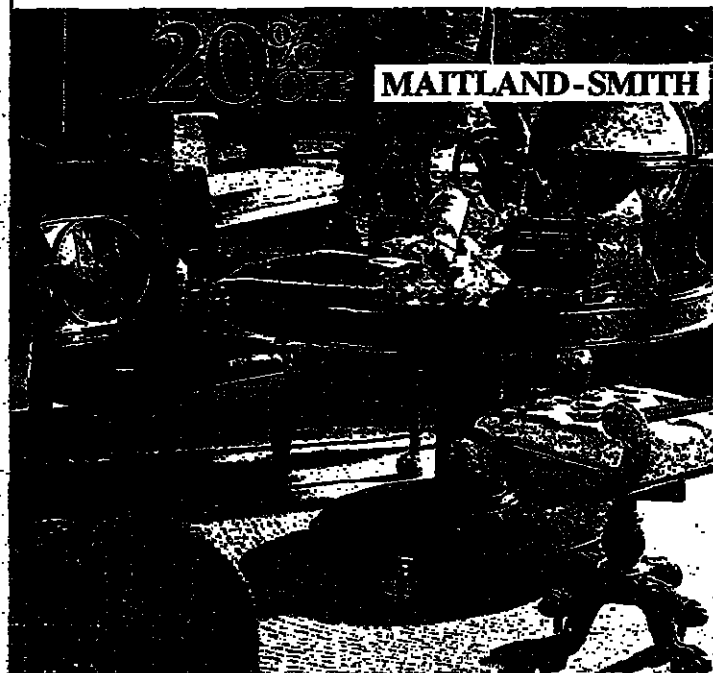
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Clarins, all major department stores (0171-629 2979) 9/10

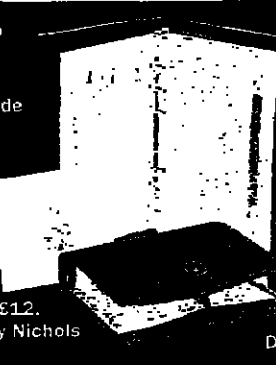
RE-NUTRIV INTENSIVE LIFTING CREME, £100
This heavy cream takes time to absorb, leaving skin sticky. Smells slightly waxy, but after weeks of regular use it worked well on fine laughter lines. Very expensive.
Estée Lauder, at selected department stores (0800 525501) 7/10

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Elizabeth Arden, at major department stores nationwide 8/10

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Objects of desire

New York handbag guru Kate Spade is now designing for inside your bag too. What makes this matching diary, notebook and agenda so desirable is the stationery inside them. All decorated with beautifully detailed watercolour illustrations. Personal organisers start at £88. Illustrated stationery starts at £12. Available in the UK from Harvey Nichols 0171-584 0011



A Rosa by any other name....

Mary Ann Sieghart on the subtle snobbery of baptism

Emileeee! Sophieeee! Jaames! The mother's cry resounds not at the gate of some prep-school playground, but across the muddy waste of an inner-city park. She might well have been christened Sharon, Tracy or Michelle herself, but in giving her children "posh" first names, she and many millions of others will help to make the Britain of the next century a far less class-conscious place than now.

For there has been a revolution in the naming of babies. If you had looked round a state primary school in the 1970s and found pegs labelled Chloe, Jessica and Georgia, or Thomas, James and Luke, you would have assumed that its catchment area was a desirable middle-class suburb.

Now it is just as likely to be on the fringe of a council estate. But you would not know. For the difference is that you can no longer tell a child's background from its name.

The latest list of the country's most popular babies' names, published this week by the Office for National Statistics, shows barely a moniker that would disgrace a duke's daughter. Maybe Danielle would not pass muster: but she is a rare exception in a 50-strong list of Jessicas, Hannahs, Charlottes, Olivias and Emmas. And the boys too sound almost uniformly middle-class: Jack, James and Thomas are the favourites, followed by Daniel, Joshua and Matthew.

So where are the Kyliases and Donnas, the Kevins and Waynes of yesterday? They are busy giving their children names that will not haunt them. It was in the 1960s and 1970s that working-class names diverged from middle-class ones, and the result has been a generation of people who feel that their origins have been labelled for life.

Compare the national list of favourite names in 1954 with that of *Times* birth announcements, and you find a remarkable similarity — even though the middle class was smaller then, so the national figures were dominated by working-class babies. For boys, seven out of the top ten were the same in both groups: the solid, classless British names such as John, David, Michael, Peter and Robert. Girls, too, shared six of the top ten: Susan, Anne, Mary, Elizabeth, Margaret and Patricia.

But ten years on, in 1964, girls in particular had diverged. There was just one common name in the top ten: Susan. The national list had names like Julie, Karen, Jacqueline and of course, Sharon. Tracy was sixth; Tracy, eleventh. Combined, they might have come top. Yet *Times* readers were naming their babies Sarah, Caroline, Catherine, Emma and Fiona.

The 1970s showed a similar pattern. Nationally popular names were Claire, Nicola, Lisa, Joanne, Michelle and Samantha, while the professional classes were still plundering their 19th-century nov-

els for Emily, Charlotte, Sophie, Lucy and Victoria. Only three names — Helen, Emma and Sarah — straddled both.

Yet, by 1984, names like Karen and Tracy had dropped not just out of the top ten, but the top 50. And ten years later they had vanished from the top 100. Today's popular names, such as Chloe, Laura, Rebecca, Victoria and Charlotte, cross class boundaries with ease.

Parents seem to be less adventurous with their boys. Until this decade, the staple names like Christopher, David, Michael, Andrew, Richard and Mark jostled for position in the national top ten, while *Times* readers mainly opted for rulers' names, such as William, James, Charles, Oliver, George and Edward.

But look at the national top 50 boys' names now, and there are no Darrens or Waynes. No embarrassment awaits in later life those who have been named after an Old Testament character, such as Daniel, Joshua and Samuel, all in the top ten. These are good old-fashioned epithets — and babies called Dan, Josh and Sam could feel just as much at home at Eton as at the local comp.

This is great news for a country that has always set too much store by birth and upbringing, and not enough by achievement. American Sharons who come over here are shocked by the snobbery they encounter: at home, they are happy to be associated with Sharon Stone, and suffer no indignity at their sobriquet.

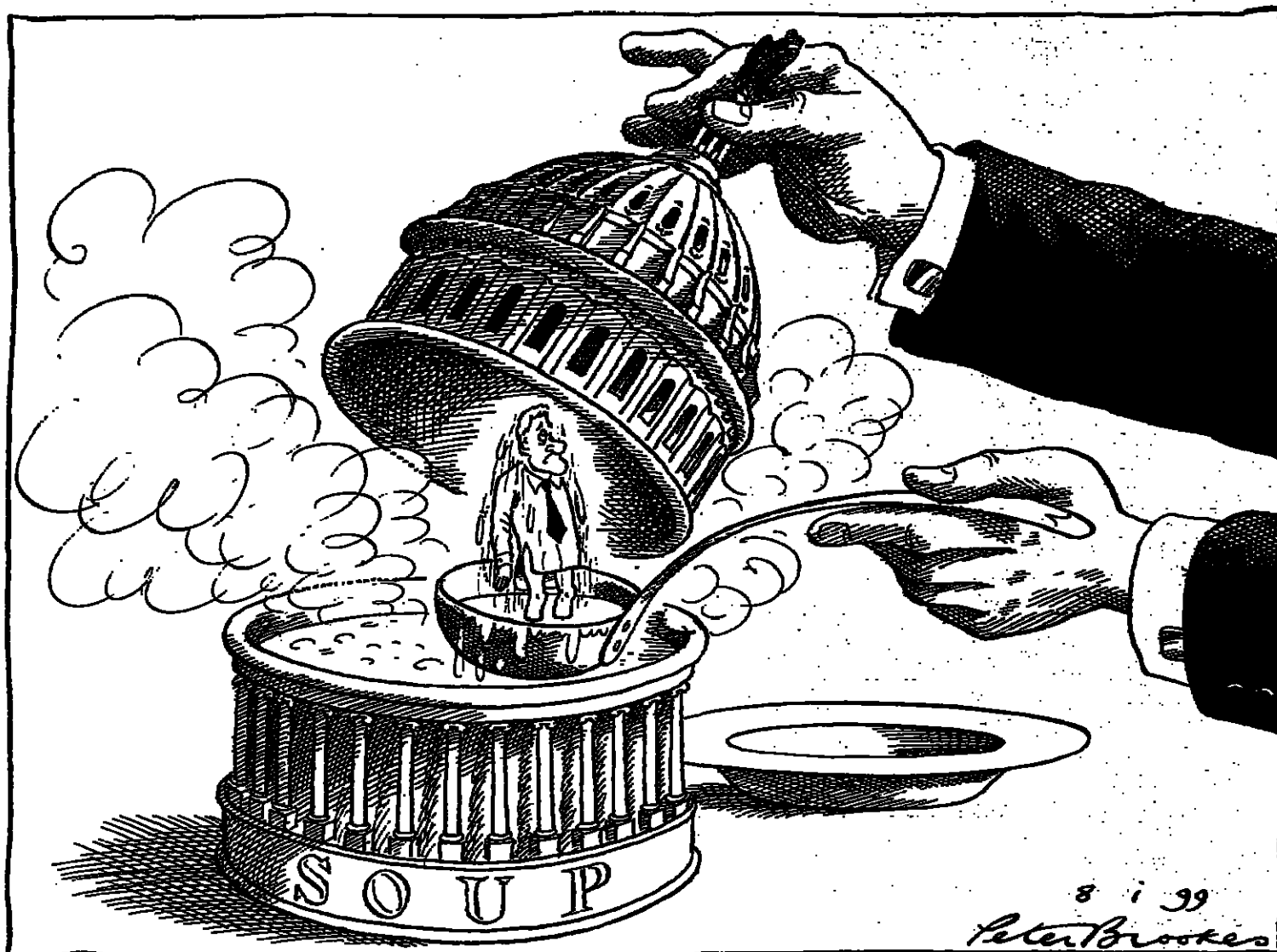
But here, you can shake off an accent, you can educate and work your way out of poverty, but a name can be an almost indelible mark of your origin. Some people change it, but that is a revolutionary step and a bureaucratic nightmare.

My parents gave us each four Christian names so that we could simply opt for another if we hated the first. I was grateful, in fact, to have one that was class-neutral. When I trained in a gymnastics club in a deprived southeast London borough, I was hugely relieved not to be called Davina or Lavinia, like some of my classmates at boarding school. Mary Ann was easily misheard as Marianne and raised no eyebrows.

When my children were born, I was equally determined not to saddle them with easily identifiable class-based names. As it turns out, all their friends, in a state school with a broad social mix, have roughly the same sort of name. It simply is not an issue.

So, away with Gemma and Donna. Out with Lucretia and Tarquin. And welcome to a society whose classes are so fluid that snobbery can now be dissolved in the wash. Next step: break down the barrier between private and state schools. But that is for another day...

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A brief history of times

What does the millennium mean?
The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks,
on what we should be celebrating

The millennium is a Christian moment. But it is also a landmark in the history of Western civilisation in which all of us have a share. The question — suddenly urgent, surprisingly obscure — is where are we going? What, as the time approaches, is the meaning of this hour?

There could be no more poignant symbol of our confusion than the Millennium Dome itself. Consider its predecessors. The Great Exhibition of 1851 told of a Britain self-confident as an imperial power. The Festival of Britain a century later spoke of a nation reassembling itself after war and looking forward to a new Elizabethan age. By contrast, the Millennium Dome is strangely bereft of meaning. It is probably the first great national symbol about which no one is altogether sure what it symbolises. Nor is this accidental. It has to do with a profound crisis in our sense of time.

One of the surprise bestsellers in the United States last year was Thomas Cahill's *The Gifts of the Jews*. Cahill's argument is that we owe to the Hebrew Bible one of the great concepts of Western civilisation — the idea of linear time. It is in biblical narrative that, for the first time, we encounter the notion that time itself is the setting of the human journey toward a destination — the Promised Land, the Messianic Age, the Kingdom of Heaven. It was this sense of travelling that gave the West its distinctive orientation towards the future.

Biblical thought stands in sharp contrast to an earlier vision, the world of myth. The most ancient documents we possess tell of humanity's first attempts to imagine order in societies threatened by natural catastrophe — floods, famines, earthquakes, droughts. These were, or so it seemed, the battles of the gods. The gods themselves were forces of nature. The great drama of myth is the struggle for cosmos against chaos. Its longing is for a world in which stability rules. Time is defined by those things that never change: the movement of the planets, the cycle of the seasons, the eternal recurrence of birth, growth and death. All things return to their source and begin again. Mythical time is cyclical time.

Against this background, few things could have been more revolutionary than the double exodus with

which the Bible begins, Abraham from Mesopotamia, Moses and the Israelites from Egypt. Biblical faith defines itself in opposition to the two great civilisations of the ancient world. God is no longer to be identified with nature. Nor is His image, mankind. Instead we are a fissile mixture of "dust of the earth" and the "breath of God". We speak and we are conceptualised. We can imagine a world different from the one that exists. The hierarchies of society are not written into the architecture of the universe. To be human is to be free, capable of choosing between good and evil. If not alone, then in partnership with God and our fellow human beings, we can begin to build a new society, one that honours the equal dignity of all persons as citizens under the sovereignty of God.

Time was transformed. No longer was it essentially static, the preservation of the status quo. Instead it became the stage on which is played the great drama of humanity as it responds, or fails to respond, to the call of God. We are no longer held captive by the past. We are not destined endlessly to repeat our ancestors' mistakes. Our vision is not bounded by what is. A new personality appears: the prophet, the person for whom history is not, in Joseph Heller's words, "a trash bag of random coincidences torn open in a wind", but instead the long road across the wilderness to freedom. A new emotion is born: hope, the belief that our dreams are not mere waves that break as they reach the hard rocks of reality, that human aspiration is not in vain. Time is the narrative of the human journey, a journey undertaken with hope because, though the way is long and hard, we are not alone.

At some stage, this vision underwent a subtle but fateful change. We can't date it precisely, but it happened around the 17th and 18th

centuries. Europe had been traumatised by the wars that followed the Reformation. People were fighting one another in the name of God — often in the name of the same God. Far from bringing peace, religion seemed to bring conflict. Far from pursuing truth, religion seemed sunk in prejudice which it was prepared to defend.

To thoughtful minds the solution seemed obvious. Secularise politics. Grant religion influence, not power. Distinguish knowledge from faith. Discover truth through reason and experimentation. Above all, pursue science. The religious vision of mankind's journey on Earth was translated into a secular frame of reference.

Old words were given new meanings — words like creative, civilisation, improvement, evolution and reform. The term "modern" which, prior to the 18th century, had signalled change in a negative or neutral sense, began to be charged with positive connotations.

One word above all others summed up the new consciousness: progress, the secular equivalent of linear time. Progress was the great hope of the Enlightenment. Through science, humanity would conquer ignorance. Through reason it would banish prejudice. Through trade it would develop the wealth of nations. Few ideas have had greater simplicity or power. To it we owe the Industrial Revolution, the spread of democracy, and the growth of tolerance as an ideal.

As we approach the end of the 20th century, however, our certainties have been shaken. We now know that the Enlightenment failed to prevent the Holocaust. Technology has given us the ability to destroy life on Earth. Reason did not cure prejudice. The growth of consumption threatens the environment whose air we breathe. Those who define our present situation as

"post-modernity" are right in this respect. We have lost the simple faith that new necessarily means better. As Robert Bellah put it, "Progress, modernity's master idea, seems less compelling when it appears that it may be progress to the abyss."

The answer is not to move backwards. Instead it is to recall that there always was more than one version of linear time. There was the Enlightenment narrative of forward motion, driven by science and human rationality. Alongside it, and never wholly eclipsed, was the biblical vision of time as a journey.

According to this, the human story is not simple and straightforward. There are setbacks, digressions, wanderings, false turns. But these are not grounds for the death of hope, because there is always a sense of destination: the just society, heaven's kingdom, a world of human dignity and grace.

I sense, in my children and their contemporaries, an urgent need for a coherent narrative through which to make sense of our headlong journey into the future. In a world that spins ever more rapidly, whose certainties are fewer by the day, they search for solid ground on which to build their lives. My guess is that they will increasingly remember what an earlier generation laboured to forget. We are not just creators but also creations, guardians of a world we did not make. Nor are we, as the Enlightenment believed, atomic individuals navigating the sea of chance by the compass of reason alone. We are persons formed at least in part by our traditions and institutions: families, communities, the moral life itself. Ultimately these rest on a sense of the transcendent that binds us to one another as fellow citizens in covenant with God.

The difference between the two linear narratives is this. Progress begets optimism. The religious journey engenders hope. Optimism is the belief that things will get better. Hope is the courage to make them better, born in the faith that we are not alone. Unlike optimism, hope survives even during tough and confusing times. That is why we need it now.

comment@the-times.co.uk

Simon Jenkins returns next week.

Philip Howard



You can keep your foolish notions of Christmas past

The cure for admiring the House of Lords is to go and look at it. The cure for asserting that *The Times* is going to the dogs is to read back numbers. The cure for believing that Fings Ain't What They Used To Be is to have been stormbound for the past fortnight.

In Ulster and truly Darkest Ayrshire from Boxing Day onwards, gales have wiped out electricity, blocked the roads and reduced life to the Dark Ages. No heat other than from logs, no cooking except for baked potatoes, no hot water, no television, no communications. The roof was blown off the theatre during the panto, giving Mother Goose the ad lib of a lifetime, as we scrambled for the exits. "This is the first time that I have brought the house down." Nostalgia for some golden age in the past is to imagine the fun without the pain.

But surely candlelight is a more humane illumination than fluorescent lighting that is activated by a footfall? Oh no it isn't. When after three days of recorded piffle you eventually find a telephone and get through to RobRoyPower to scream for help: "Wire you insulate", the reply is: "I couldn't get him earlier."

But at least you can read a good book by candlelight? Oh no you can't. Even the Christmas candles run out in two days, and the only shop has run out of matches also. And the light that wax gives is so dim and flickers so much that you need every candle in the cottage for reading, a crime of selfishness vetoed by the non-readers. Either print was bigger or eyes were more accustomed to dim light. But how Bess of Hardwick Hall and her ladies stitched all that intricate embroidery in the dim winter evenings by candlelight is a mystery. How did ancient Romans read post meridiem?

But you can get back to the traditional values of family games and story-telling around the hearth? Oh no you can't. Stories of the adventures of Hercules or Aeneas cannot compete for attention of small boys, alas, with Tom and Jerry. Hide and seek in the dark causes breakages, blood and screams. The oldest winter game of all, creating shadow figures on the wall of the cave with your hands, loses its attraction, and completely fails when the candles run out.

But at least there was some Test cricket on the radio from sunny Australia to keep you comatose through the long nights. This is true. But you forget that the batteries are off. The batteries have run out. So the only radio that works is Jamie's Christmas present of a clockwork radio. This runs down every quarter of an hour. Winding it up sounds like Big Ben clearing his throat. So sleepers who care nothing for cricket complain from their beds and scream from their cots or swear from their sofas.

Is there nothing to be said for the golden age before electricity? Well, at least they had only human burglar alarms. For reasons only intelligible to a physicist, the power cut has set off the alarm. Robert the Bruce only knows why there is a burglar alarm, since the only neighbours within miles of potential earshot have four woolly legs. But when you eventually get through to Deacon Brodie Burglar Alarms, he says: "Och, the battery will run down in an hour." Wrong. So after three days and nights of BELLS that draw no attention from the sheep, the medieval solution is to take a pickaxe to the box.

Peasant living brings out neighbourliness from those who have Agas or spare blankets. Surviving hardships gives one a warm metaphorical glow, but shaving or bathing babies in cold water does not. It is a small triumph to remember how to hand milk the neighbouring cows, cut off from their milking machines. But one had forgotten, of course, what hard work it is on the fingers and how early in the morning milking starts.

So do not believe the sentimental nostalgics. Electrics and hot water are goods. Medieval feasts were jolly only if you had a hall like Penshurst or Knole, and an army of scullions to burn their fingers. The millennium bug can do what it likes to computers. But if it switches off the electricity, I am taking to my bed until it switches it on again. Bed is the best place to be for the millennium anyway.

JASPER GERARD

Double fault

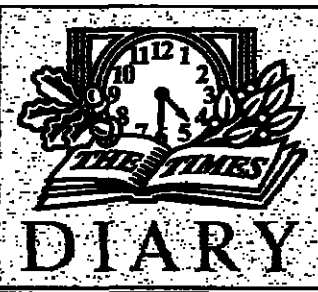
THOSE two toffs, Lady Antonia Fraser and Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, have teamed up to thwart plans to build on tennis courts where D.H. Lawrence was once a ball-boy. Campden Hill Tennis Club, one of London's oldest and smartest, has been served an ace by Thames Water, which owns an empty reservoir under the 100-year-old club — it plans to turn the Holland Park site into £120 million of "luxury homes". Early this century, the 1,000-strong club was the West London playground for a pre-war literary set centred on Ford Maddox Ford and Ezra Pound; in 1908, Lawrence started a miserable spell as a teacher in Croydon and was slowly absorbed into the circle by Pound after pitching his poems at literary magazines. Pound asked Maddox Ford and chums if he could bring his new friend to the club, and Lawrence — not a player — was soon a 24-year-old ball-boy.

In these harsher post-privatisation climes, club members have been tempted by Thames Water to accept 21 town houses and 41 flats on half of their two-acre site. In return for not parading in their whites outside Kensington & Chelsea's offices when the plan is being schmoozed with a sports hall with 12 courts, Lady Antonia and Sir Evelyn (right) are not appeased. Says Mrs Harold Finter: "We're very concerned about the noise and



vibrations that will come when the building starts. The scheme will exacerbate traffic problems."

● CHARLIE WHELAN is an honourable man, so I believe his claim that he did not leak the story of Peter Mandelson's "loan" to his friend Paul Routledge. But I fear he may have given ammunition to less trusting sorts by enjoying lunch on Wednesday with the washed-up Routledge, author of the forthcoming hatchet job "Manderson". He was seen with his fellow



Bolshevik at an "upmarket greasy spoon" in Clerkenwell. At the end of an exhausting lunch, I have heard that Whelan and Routledge broke into song with old favourites including a rendition of the battle hymn of the Soviet Air Force.

Prince of piste

THE Prince of Wales has pulled off a spectacular triumph in Klosters. He and his chum Charlie Palmer-Tomkinson, Tara's dad, won the Beat Pop Cowbell Marathon Derby, an all-day event in which 60 teams tried to race as many miles as possible. The two Charlies covered 43 miles to win the main event and the seniors (qualification: the combined age of the woman team must be over 100) — thus beating the favourite, Prince Harry and his ski-instructor partner,

Bruno Sprecher, Charles's friend and local ski guide. The latter damaged his leg on the first run so he and Harry had to withdraw.

"To win you have to know every ball of snow and how to avoid the queues," I am told. "Charles really is a fairly impressive mover."

● THOSE anoraks at Microsoft must like their boss. With Microsoft Office 98, tap in "I wish Bill Gates was dead" and check it with the built-in thesaurus, two options come up: "hilarious" and "I'll drink to that".

Sloping off

TRUANCY on the slopes. As David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, urges parents not to take sprogs out of school in term-time (unless they are PM or Home Secretary), MPs and peers are swishing down the ski runs of Davos with their families. The parliamentary ski team, chaired by Denis MacShane and headed by those other notables Tom King and Lord Astor of Hever, trots off to the town every year to lose against the Swiss. The hundred-strong group will not pack its goggles away until this weekend — a week after the start of the school term.

"I deeply resent the way you exploit children in this way," says

Hugh Bayley, a social security minister and one of the team, when asked why his two children were in Davos rather than at school this week. "You make their life a misery. It makes me furious. It is the only time of year they are out of school. They have a rotten time anyway with a part-time dad." So as compensation, the lucky blighters receive a part-time education.

● FRANK FIELD intends to be a good boy next term. He has tabled 28 questions for his successors at Social Security — just in case he did not already know the answers.

Ground down

PETER PAN has had his wings clipped at the National after the Never Bird suffered a fall. Susanah Fellows had to leave the show to be taken to hospital after slipping and cracking a rib. Although Susanah (pictured) is returning, all Never Bird feats will be performed by her understudy. "She can do the rest of the Mrs Darling stuff," I am told, "because we do her corset up really tight."

● CAROL THATCHER has handbagged a worker painting the wall outside the Tate. "He was painting it a bilious purple. It was appalling. So I went up and asked



whether that was his choice. He just mumbled." Poor chap.

Whicker's way

SO WHAT coconut encrusted isle will host Alan Whicker for the millennium? Possibly the Channel Islands which, he says, "get great sunsets". And one does not need to fly. He is terrified of a plane crash caused by the millennium bug. "So why take that chance?"

JASPER GERARD

مركز الامن لاجل



WHAT MONTY SAW

A racist verdict that Africa has done its best to prove right

The African is "a complete savage", whose only hope is a British colonial "master plan" to carve out giant West, Central and East African federations and unlock their vast wealth. That bluntly contemptuous and, to modern eyes, blatantly racist, verdict on the capacity of Africans for self-government, delivered 50 years ago by a British Chief of the Imperial General Staff, long dead, but only now made public, should in the normal course of history have no more than curiosity value in 1999.

In 1948, with the exception of Ethiopia, whose "state of medieval feudalism" so appalled Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, the flags of Britain, France, Belgium and Portugal still flew over black Africa. It was not until 1957, nine years after Monty's report on his tour of a dozen African territories, that Nkrumah's Ghana led the march to independence. But the map changed rapidly thereafter. Tony Blair may be courting, in South Africa, a country that achieved majority rule only recently, but it is nearly 40 years since atlases painted most of Africa in colonial hues.

Yet so badly have Africans in fact ruled themselves that, were Monty alive today, he might be claiming that he saw the future more clearly than the decolonisers who were to pull Britain out of Africa as precipitately as it had scrambled in the 1890s to get in. The roll-call of villains includes some of this century's most murderous: Amin, Bokassa, Mengistu and Abacha are only the most familiar. The rogue's gallery of incompetent, corrupt dictators is longer still: take your pick of past heads of state from Kenya, Hastings Banda or Sekou Touré, not to mention Nkrumah himself, and innumerable generals and jumped-up corporals. Tanzania and Zambia may have suffered from fools more than rogues, but the legacy of the lunatic, paternalistic socialism of Nyerere and Kaunda will take decades to reverse.

In parts of Africa, notably Uganda, Ghana and bits of the Horn, no-nonsense though still autocratic reformers are restoring hope, but in Kenya and Zimbabwe, Presidents Moi and Mugabe perpetuate a miserable tradition. Even in South Africa, for all the respect due to President

Mandela, crime and corruption are rising, as is unemployment. It is not surprising that Africa tops the league for coups, unrepayable debt and civil collapse — and comes bottom, after receiving more aid per head than any other region, by every measure of prosperity or quality of life.

In Africa's apocalypse, the warrior is only one of the horsemen. But its anarchic wars seem unstoppable. This week, for the second time in a year, Sierra Leone's terrified civilians cowered in their houses while murderous rebels battled for control of the capital against ineffectual government troops and Nigerian "peacekeepers". The rape of Congo, which finally rid itself last year of President Mobutu, prince of kleptocrats in a continent blatantly pillaged by its "fathers of independence", continues. This time half a dozen African governments are militarily involved, motivated more by greed for diamond loot than by solidarity with Mobutu's venally inept successor, Laurent Kabila. The shooting down of yet another United Nations plane takes wretched Angola, after a huge international investment in restoring peace, back towards war's abyss.

So was Monty right, or have Africans who were being singularly unlucky in their rulers? In the judiciary and the churches, parts of the hounded press and many a village are enough examples of courageous opposition to misrule to challenge his sweeping verdict. And, however appalling Africa's civil rights record, Monty's grand design had no room for democracy either.

He demanded, rather than proposed, a permanent, intensive British engagement in Africa, dictated not by altruism but by ambitions to rebuild Britain's, not Africa's, prosperity. The then colonial secretary rejected his plans not on moral grounds but because he thought Africa too poor to be worth a "great expense of money and effort". Had Monty won, Britain would have imposed an indefensible, and unsustainable, version of apartheid. Britain could have ruled Africa better and left it better. But the sobering fact remains that Africans today are poorer than they were when Monty sought to make of the socialist Atlee an improbable second Cecil Rhodes.

BRING FORTH THE FORMS

How Mandelson can help his building society and himself

The Prince of Darkness, of all people, should know that devils lurk in details. The Government needs to put the events of the past fortnight behind it, and to shift attention from the reasons for resignations to its new policy agenda. But there are still loose ends from Notting Hillgate that could be fashioned into a new nose for Peter Mandelson unless he takes action.

Although the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry protested that he had done nothing wrong in borrowing money from a friend to purchase his Notting Hill home, and that none need have known the details of a private arrangement between two opposition backbenchers, a third party seems to have been deceived in this deal long before either Mr Mandelson or Geoffrey Robinson became ministers with interests to declare. The Britannia Building Society, from whom Mr Mandelson secured a mortgage, apparently knew nothing of his private deal. If he withheld information from them, Mr Mandelson has placed himself and the society's officers in a difficult position. He should now make rapid amends for his reticence so far by embracing candour.

After interviewing Mr Mandelson yesterday, the Britannia is considering what action to take. If the society felt that Mr Mandelson had been less than candid in declaring his outstanding liabilities, then it is open to it to press charges. If details of Mr Robinson's loan were not included on the mortgage application form, there would be a case for a fraud prosecution. It is up to the society to decide on an

appropriate course of action. But it has to operate in a delicate political framework.

The Britannia is one of those building societies which has retained its mutual character. It and other mutuals, are looking to the Government of which Mr Mandelson was so recently a part to help protect them from individual members who wish to demutualise societies in search of a windfall. The minister responsible for these matters, Patricia Hewitt, has been less responsive to the mutual societies than they would wish and some suspect that the Government would be only too happy to see thousands secure windfalls in this potentially recessionary year. Given its wish to secure a more favourable hearing from Government about protecting its mutual status, the temptation exists for the Britannia to let Mr Mandelson off the hook, whatever he wrote on his form.

There are other good reasons why the society would not wish to prosecute. Mr Mandelson is likely to meet all his obligations, and he is clearly not a professional fraudster. It might be imagined that, all other things being equal, the matter could be dropped. But other things are not equal. There must be no suspicion that favouritism had been shown to Mr Mandelson for political reasons. The former minister can help the society out of its bind by placing all the documentation relevant to his loan and mortgage application in the public domain. Such a step would win applause and show that Mr Mandelson had absorbed the cautionary lessons of this affair. If he ever wants to be a prince again, he cannot afford darkness.

KNOW YOUR LIMIT

Why drink-drive levels should be left unchanged

Although this Christmas has been as joyous as any other, drivers have tempered their celebrations with moderation. The number failing breath-tests over the holiday fell by more than a fifth compared with the previous year. Good news in itself, this strengthens the arguments against the Government's proposals to cut the legal alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg per 100ml of blood, barely one pint of beer. Sceptics — who apparently include the Prime Minister — recognise that this policy would impinge on millions of law-abiding citizens, while not effectively tackling the hard core of persistent drink drivers.

Attitudes towards drinking and driving have changed dramatically over the past two decades. The days when it was common for motorists to enjoy "one for the road" are over. As a result, British roads are among the safest in Europe — even though the legal limit is 30mg higher than in seven EU countries, and 60mg higher than in Sweden. The number of deaths from drink-drive accidents fell from 1,640 in 1979 to 540 in 1997. As the decline in deaths has begun to slow, the Government wants to target the dwindling numbers who continue to drink and drive. While this is a laudable aim, cutting the legal limit is

the wrong way to achieve it. Motorists two and half times over the current 80mg limit cause half of all drink-driving related deaths. This hardened group is unlikely to change its behaviour if the level is reduced to 50mg. Ministers have been advised that, if they focused their efforts on these heavy drinkers, four times more deaths could be avoided than by cutting the overall limit. If the Government ignores this advice, it risks turning law-abiding citizens into criminals and undermining people's respect for the law.

An even more absurd argument in favour of changing the law has been made by Neil Kinnock, the EU Transport Commissioner. He believes that Britain's legal limit should be brought into line with other EU countries. Not only does this run entirely counter to the principle of subsidiarity, it defies reality. If there is any copying to be done, other EU countries should be matching British practice.

The public respects the drink-driving laws as they stand. Further moves to crack down on serious offenders would be supported. Yet lowering the limit would be an unacceptable, unnecessary act, making millions of drivers the victims of the Government's bossiness.

Impeachment and the rule of law

From Dr Robert McGeehan

Sir, The United States Constitution envisages impeachment as a procedure whose objects, in the words of the founders, include "the abuse or violation of some public trust". Perjury, or intentionally lying under oath when solemnly sworn to tell the truth, is a criminal offence which leading scholars on November 9 testified to the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives falls within the intended meaning of the founders' language referring to "high crimes and misdemeanours" (report, November 10).

John Chuckman (letter, December 28) writes that impeachment is a remedy against "an executive threatening the liberties of the people". He is correct: since there can be no liberty without the rule of law, any undermining of the equal application of the law to every citizen threatens the freedom of all. Impeachment, therefore, is the appropriate constitutional step.

In the effort not to lose sight of what is really at stake in America's tawdry but serious presidential (but not constitutional) crisis, reciting the nonsense that criminal falsehoods are somehow excusable if they can be packaged as sexual prevarication is deeply subversive of our liberty under the rule of law.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT MCGEEHAN,
Cooks Corner Farm,
Freeland, Oxfordshire OX8 8HW,
January 7.

From Mr D. G. Appleton

Sir, How could such an august assembly as the House of Representatives so cripple a president and seriously damage the prestige and international authority of the United States?

Under the Anglo-Saxon legal conventions there exists such a thing as frivolous and vexatious litigation. The inquiry to which President Clinton has been subjected falls squarely within the scope of that concept. The obvious conclusion is that the whole business should be set aside and the Starr report and its author left to oblivion.

What the world has witnessed is not so much a legal process as a surpassing example of puritanical self-righteousness and hypocrisy, vindictiveness and turpitude. Is it too much to hope that the Senate will have the courage to recognise this and to set at naught the disastrous act of folly of the House?

Yours faithfully,
D. G. APPLETON,
5 Stoney Road, Taunton TA2 7NP,
January 7.

Sheffield housing

From Dr Sue Powell

Sir, Mr George Wedd (letter, January 5) rightly defends the recently listed Park Hill flats in Sheffield against those of your earlier correspondents (December 30) who argue for whole-scale demolition.

Building housing is a dubious approach to social and urban reform, and advocates of the demolition of Park Hill should surely learn from the past. Is it not contradictory to condemn the clearance policies of the Sixties (when most people agreed that Victorian "slums" should be torn down) and yet advocate a new clearance campaign for postwar housing?

In Leeds, the huge Quarry Hill estate, a monumental housing project of the 1930s, was demolished in the early Eighties. It could have been refurbished as low-cost housing, for example, for students. It has been replaced by an undistinguished jumble of Post-Modernist structures — and a great deal of ill-kempt grass and car-parking.

Is this progress? We have a duty to make Park Hill work.

Yours sincerely,
SUE POWELL,
7 Woodbine Terrace,
Headingley, Leeds LS6 4AF,
January 6.

Misuse of funds

From Mr J. K. M. Krawiec

Sir, Stephen Silber, QC, is quite correct ("Misuse of funds: civil servants who slip up", Law, January 5): a new law is needed on the misuse of public office.

However, such a law ought to apply not only to local government but also to all areas of the public sector, including both officials and politicians in central government.

Local government in Britain has a far higher standard of ethics than in other countries, and other parts of the public sector ought to be brought up to this standard.

Yours faithfully,
J. K. M. KRAWIEC
(Chief Executive and Town Clerk),
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council,
PO Box 6, Civic Centre,
Victoria Avenue,
Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6ER,
January 5.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Christian compassion for refugees

From Dr R. E. Bancroft-Marcus

Sir, Archbishop Carey is right to appeal for more compassion for refugees, but the examples of successful integration cited by him and *The Times* (report, January 1) could have been better chosen.

To me, a refugee is someone who flees for his life to escape an advancing army or the threat of political assassination. Einstein may indeed have fled Nazi persecution, but he enjoyed an established reputation before leaving Germany to continue, not begin, his brilliant career. Chagall worked for the communist regime and left Russia as a result of an aesthetic dispute.

Marlene Dietrich, already a successful film star, left Germany before Hitler came to power; her motivation was fame and fortune in Hollywood, and her inclusion in the Archbishop's list strikes me as particularly insulting to all past and present victims of real persecution.

Those lucky enough to have sufficient wealth and international connections to leave a country at a time of their choosing and take up prosperous residence elsewhere are surely not refugees, but up-market economic migrants. A penniless "true" refugee, whatever his talents or qualifications, who graduates from a detention camp to a job in McDonald's, starts his British career with no such advantages.

The villagers fleeing murderous forces (on both sides) in former Yugoslavia appear to me eminently worthy of a Christian's compassion and support, whether or not they can ever make any return or contribution to our culture. We should make every effort to avoid creating or acquiescing in any situation — especially poverty and famine — which may dislodge large numbers of our fellow humans from their homes and their native environment.

Yours sincerely,
ROSEMARY E. BANCROFT-MARCUS,
30 South Avenue, Abingdon,
Oxfordshire OX14 1QR,
fjmrem@aol.com,
January 1.

Flu 'epidemic'

From the Director of the Royal College of General Practitioners

Sir, "How... do the powers that be know that there is no flu epidemic", asks Mr Ray Ellis (letter, January 7), if sufferers do not consult a doctor?

The number of persons identified with influenza-like illnesses is clearly based on those who consult and is inevitably an underestimate of the total sick population. Careful examination of the data we receive (especially the rates in differing age groups) allows us to make comparisons with influenza outbreaks in previous years.

It is on that basis that the word "epidemic" is applied and used in a national rather than a local context. We could on the one hand describe every winter outbreak of influenza as an epidemic and on the other hand confine its use to unusual situations.

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary provides two definitions of epidemic: Prevalent among a people or community at

a special time, and produced by some special cause not generally present in the affected locality. Widely prevalent, or universal.

It is in this context that we reserve the word epidemic for the more serious outbreaks, since influenza is "generally present" in winter. The incidence data published by the RCGP are based on aggregated national figures, and patterns commonly vary widely in different parts of the country.

On a more positive note, whilst there is as yet no curative treatment for influenza in regular use in this country, recent developments with a class of drugs known as neuraminidase inhibitors herald this prospect within two years.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS FLEMING,
Director, Royal College of General Practitioners,
Birmingham Research Unit,
54 Lordswood Road,
Birmingham B17 9DB,
January 7.

Leslie Stuart recalled

From Mr Sheridan Morley

Sir, Rodney Milnes's characteristic expert and enthralling account of the long-lost composer Leslie Stuart ("A toast to the Florodora man", Arts, December 30) omits one crucial detail. Stuart was among the very first British theatrical composers, ahead even of Gilbert and Sullivan, to have an entire film made of his life and music, albeit one of considerable eccentricity.

You Will Remember (1940), a title which in itself conveys unusual confidence since audiences could already have been expected to have almost entirely forgotten Stuart, consisted very largely of my late father Robert being wheeled along several British piers in a bathchair by Elyn Williams (no gay relationship was indicated, however), while a succession of conveniently placed palm court orchestras obligingly played highlights from his scores.

Since neither my father nor Mr Williams ever show any indication of recognising any of them, not even *Florodora*, the film has caused considerable merriment for several decades among those few of us ever able to locate a screening on some obscure cable station in the small hours. It did, however, prove a remarkable forerunner for such later bio-musical disasters as the Cole Porter story, *Night and Day*, and the curious thing about *You Will Remember* is that nobody, not even Mr Milnes, ever does.

Yours sincerely,
SHERIDAN MORLEY,
5 Admiral Square,
Chelsea Harbour, SW10 0UU.

London Wildlife Trust — to devise a conservation success right at the heart of the millennium celebrations, setting a precedent for all the other sites where black redstarts breed along the Thames Corridor.

I realise that the Dome is the media's *bête noire* at the moment; but it saddens me that you have to enlist a very charming and rare bird to have a dig at the likes of Peter Mandelson and Lord Falconer.

Yours sincerely,
D. GEDGE,
7 Dartmouth Grove, SE10 8AR,
January 5.

From the Chief Executive of the New Millennium Experience Company

Sir, Despite your diarist's front-page report claiming that nesting redstarts will interrupt work on the Dome, no sighting and no records of sightings on the Dome site exist with NMEC or the Environment Agency, or indeed with the London Wildlife Trust. Is this a canard, or the first cuckoo of 1999?

Yours faithfully,
JENNIFER PAGE,
Chief Executive, New Millennium Experience Company,
110 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1 9SB.

New year revels — and the day after

From Mr John Hall

Sir, From our house perched at 2,000 feet in the Italian Marches we see and hear with delight fireworks sprouting and detonating from all the ten or so near or distant hilltop towns of our area. This merry welcome to a new year is a gesture of traditional extravagance on the part of otherwise tight-fisted municipalities.

After consuming a sequence of pastas, then pigs' trotters with lentils, then *dolci* with *spumante*, most of the populations, average 5,000, will be in the piazza watching the fun, feeling good. Fireworks are exhilarating!

The recently revived Venice Carnival used to end with a magnificent fireworks display in the Basin of St Mark's. Since the grand finale, the one event all Venetians looked forward to, was cut — who knows why — it has lost its civic spirit and is merely commercialised tourism.

Watching on television the fine new year fireworks round the world, from Sydney to New York to Edinburgh, we wondered why Londoners aren't given a treat. Instead, we watched them being warned by policemen not to go to Trafalgar Square.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HALL,
Contra Sciente 84,
62026 San Ginesio,
Macerata, Italy,
January 1.

From Ms Harriet Lyall

Sir, The afternoon of January 1, 1999, had a nightmare quality in south Edinburgh (report, "Six cities vie to be party capital of 1998", December 31).

Along Bruntsfield Links, the pavements were heaped high with rubbish and strewn with broken glass. Pools of vomit lay in stair entries. Young people wandered aimlessly, faces drained and blank in the sulphur glare of the street lights. I was ashamed of my city, and angry that commercialism has given such a sordid aspect to the traditional Scottish new year.

By becoming the capital of Planet Hogmanay, the city boasts it has "made" £30 million. It is a strange irony that, in order to create this wealth, it seems necessary to destroy the very environment for whose care and enhancement the money is presumably intended.

Yours,
HARRIET LYALL,
69 Merchiston Crescent,
Edinburgh EH10 5AQ,
January 4.

Books for schools

From Mr John F. Allen

Sir, I write to applaud your Free Books for Schools efforts and your leading article, "Collection days" (January 4).

Approaching my 70th birthday, I clearly remember walking home with great pride from primary school, clutching my first prize for reading, a volume of *Aesop's Fables*. Since that day books have been my constant companions. Encouraged by my mother to join the public library at an early age, I have been a member since the 1930s.

I believe that children should be encouraged to love books and to realise that with books on the shelf one is never without a friend. My collection exceeds 200 volumes, many autographed by their authors, I refer to them regularly, sometimes just to hold and admire, because my historical reference books tell me so much in my hobby as a war and aviation historian.

Keep up the good work, literacy is paramount: it holds the key to the future.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN F. ALLEN,
Arnwood, 31 Lynwood Drive,
Merley, Wimbome BH21 1UT,
January 4.

That sinking feeling

From Mr Richard Burt

Sir, With regard to Mr Frederick King's ambition (letter, January 5) to pit cutlery-free water from washing-up bowls, it was standard procedure, whilst emptying a "fanny" (ie. a large bowl) full of washing-up water down the "gash chute" of a destroyer at sea, to quote whilst doing so: "Tinkle, tinkle little spoon, knife and fork will follow soon."

They invariably did!

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BURT,
20 Prestbury Crescent,
Woodmansterne,
Banstead, Surrey SM7 3PJ,
January 5.

Romance of the road

From Mr Richard Need

Sir, I have often thought that it would be fun to have roadside notices on the M25, where the meridian crosses it near Waltham Abbey to the north and Limsfield to the south, announcing to motorists: "You are now entering the eastern (western) hemisphere."

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD NEED,
11 Hemmingsford Road,
Chesham, Surrey SM3 8HG,
January 2.

THE TIMES

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HOLIDAY**
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY JANUARY 8 1999

Barclays leads £150m Atlantic settlement



Gunn: says he is vindicated

By JASON NISSE

A VEIL was drawn over one of the greatest financial disasters in City history yesterday when Barclays Bank led a £150 million settlement of litigation brought over the collapse in 1990 of British & Commonwealth Holdings, the financial conglomerate.

B&C, once a FTSE 100 company, was placed in administration with debts of more than £1 billion weeks after the collapse of its subsidiary, Atlantic Computers, the leasing business.

Barclays, whose merchant banking subsidiary, Barclays de Zoete Wedd, advised B&C on its fateful £408 million purchase of Atlantic two years before its failure, is paying £116 million as part of the settlement of writs issued by Ernst & Young, the administrators of B&C, over the Atlantic deal.

The writ, issued in 1994, originally claimed more than £500 million, which was the amount that B&C had to write off when Atlantic was placed in administration. This was reduced to £430 million early last year, though by the end of the year the interest bill had increased the total liability to more than £550 million.

The case, in which the administrators allege negligence by B&C and a host of City firms for not spotting the problems with Atlantic's finances which ultimately brought the leasing company down, was not due to come to court until May 2000 and was scheduled to last up to 18 months.

A complex settlement of the action, brokered by the Centre for Dispute Resolution, was agreed yesterday involving more than half a dozen parties from the City, though none accepted liabilities for B&C's losses.

Barclays is paying £116 million, though more than £40 million of this will be covered by indemnity insurance. It kept its share of the liability despite selling B&C to Credit Suisse First

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	6101.2	(-47.6)
Yield	2.68%	
FTSE All Share	2764.57	(-16.74)
Nikkei	13336.56	(+68.10)
New York:		
Dow Jones	9482.19	(-52.78)
S&P Composite	1288.67	(-3.67)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	4 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long bond	7 1/2%	(10 1/4%)
Yield	5.23%	(5.18%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor 3-month	119.46	(119.16)
STERLING		
New York:	1.6492	(1.6552)
London:	1.6497	(1.6553)
Sfr	1.4135	(1.4135)
Yen	183.35	(188.48)
£ Index	99.0	(99.2)
DOLLAR		
London:	1.1672	(1.1615)
Sfr	1.3685	(1.3625)
Yen	111.68	(112.28)
£ Index	103.3	(103.4)
Tokyo close Yen 110.92		
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$11.30	(\$11.50)
GOLD		
London close	\$290.06	(\$287.46)

* denotes midday trading prices

Bank brings base rate down to 6%

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

INTEREST rates are on the way down again, after the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee yesterday cut base rates by a further 0.25 per cent to 6 per cent.

The reduction, which had not been widely expected in the City after three months of cuts, returned base rates to the level prevailing when Labour came to power in May 1997.

Although this provided evidence that the Christmas shopping season had not been as bad as many retailers had warned, it did not deter the MPC from cutting rates again in view of other weak surveys in recent days from manufac-

turing and service industries. On the stock market the FTSE 100 index of leading shares briefly rallied on news of the unexpected rate cut but then slid again as investors sought profits after this week's surge to near record highs.

The FTSE closed 47.6 points lower at 6,101.2, though this is a relatively small proportion of Wednesday's 190-point rise. Sterling was left unmoved by yesterday's rate cut, ending unchanged from Wednesday's close on its index against a basket of currencies at 99.0.

European bourses, many of which had hit records on Wednesday, also fell prey to profit-taking yesterday and the euro fell victim to a surge in the yen which hit a 27-month high of ¥109.82 against the dollar.

The euro fell to ¥128 in Far Eastern trading overnight, its lowest level since its launch on Monday. Part of the yen's strength this week has been due to the unwinding of complex investment positions in Japanese government bonds.

More than this, however, is a perception of increasing fragility in the dollar. Yesterday, the US currency was undermined by worries about impeachment proceedings and partly because of financial troubles in Brazil.

Volvo car division rumours persist

By CARL MORTSHED
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS EDITOR

TAKEOVER speculation continues to swirl around Volvo, the Swedish car and truck manufacturer, as leading Swedish institutions confirmed their interest in a sale of the group's car division.

Volvo refused to comment on reports that the company had appointed JP Morgan, the US investment bank, to advise on a sale or merger of its automobile division which accounts for about half of group sales and profits.

However, the Volvo "B" share price continued to rise on hopes that the company could secure up to £4 billion for the car maker. Volvo's stock has gained more than 20 per cent over the past week as rumours of a deal with Ford, Fiat or Volkswagen, gain ground.

Major shareholders of Volvo, including Robur, AMF and Skandia Insurance, accounting for a fifth of the equity, indicated they were not averse to such a move if terms were acceptable.

Chris Wills, analyst at Lehman Bros, said Ford would be the ideal partner as the US company already manufactures large cars and could provide the platform for new Volvo models. "Ford would get into a higher-margin car business. It could share engines and launch Volvos more cheaply."

Littlewoods, the family-owned retail group, was left disappointed by a slowdown in sales growth at its high street stores and catalogue operation ahead of Christmas, and said it expects the retail sector to remain in the doldrums until autumn at the earliest.

Barry Gibson, chief executive of the Liverpool group, which is owned by the Moores family, said that underlying sales growth in the key nine weeks to January 2 slowed to 2 per cent. This compares with 8 per cent year-on-year growth in the preceding six months.

Clothing was by far the worst-performing part of the business. Some consumer durables, such as mobile phones, sold very well, helping to boost the performance of the index Extra combined high street/catalogue business.

Mr Gibson said that sales were noticeably weaker in the north of the country. "In areas where there is a dependency on manufacturing there is a very marked slowdown in-

deed. Unemployment is becoming a really big worry," he said.

Although the winter sales have started well, he takes a gloomy view of the coming months. He does not believe yesterday's quarter-point cut in base rates will have a signif-

icant impact on consumer confidence. "I don't think we'll see a bounce back until the autumn," he said.

Littlewoods has begun 1999 with a relatively tight stock position and no markdown concerns, he said. A number of clothing retailers, including

If Enic buys Wembley, owner of the national football stadium, it need not prevent it from being rebuilt for a World Cup bid

Enic to tackle Wembley with cash and shares bid

By ADAM JONES

ENIC, the football and leisure group, is trying to buy Wembley, the owner of the national football stadium, in a move that throws England's troubled bid for the 2006 World Cup further into doubt.

Wembley shares surged 55p to 367 1/2p, valuing the company at more than £200 million, after it admitted that it had received a takeover approach.

Enic, which has stakes in various European football clubs, including Glasgow Rangers, is thought to be offering a mix of cash and shares for Wembley, which also owns Wembley Arena and the conference centre, as well as US race tracks. Wem-

bley's executive directors are thought to have looked unfavourably on the cash-and-shares approach. Enic shares have risen from 292 1/2p to 123 1/2p in the past year.

Wembley Stadium needs to be rebuilt for the World Cup bid. For this to happen, Wembley plc - which is not eligible for National Lottery funding - had agreed to sell the stadium to a qualifying trust, the English National Stadium Development Company.

The £103 million sale was agreed by the board despite objections by some non-executives, understood to be Peter Mead, chairman of Abbott Mead Vick-

ers, the advertising agency; Jarvis Astaire, a promoter; and Roger Brooke, chairman of Candover, the venture capitalist. It is understood that the deal to sell the stadium to the trust, which will ultimately be controlled by the Football Association, could be signed in the next few days after Customs & Excise confirmed that it will not be subject to VAT.

However, the deal will not be finalised until it is passed by Wembley plc shareholders, allowing a hostile bidder room to scupper the sale. A source close to the negotiations said it was not necessarily the case that Enic would scrap the sale.

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Littlewoods disappoints on two fronts

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LITTLEWOODS, the family-owned retail group, was left disappointed by a slowdown in sales growth at its high street stores and catalogue operation ahead of Christmas, and said it expects the retail sector to remain in the doldrums until autumn at the earliest.

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Decision over ING Barings delayed

BY PAUL DURMAN

The future of ING Barings, the investment banking arm of the Dutch financial group, is to be decided next month.

ING's management board discussed the fate of Barings earlier this week, but David Robins, chief executive since last October, has been given another month to complete his strategic review. ING Barings ran up losses and provisions of about 2 billion guilders (£645 million) in the first nine months of last year, highlighting its exposure to emerging markets. The bank is expected to embark on another round of restructuring, after deciding to cut 1,200 jobs last autumn. A spokesman suggested sale or closure was not on the agenda.

He said: "ING has always retained its commitment to the business and corporate and investment banking in general. It is a core activity that it has to keep going if it is going to serve its clients. The nuclear option [closure or sale] is not on the cards."

Godfried van der Lugt, chairman of ING, recently told staff that the group would have to accept a fall in business from emerging markets — previously a focus of its investment.

He said the key aims of the new strategy "are greater stability in ING Barings' results and improved profitability. We shall remain active in emerging markets and the US, but the emphasis will clearly be on the countries of Western Europe."

Responsibility for ING Barings on the group's executive board now rests with Michel Tilmant, who is also president of BBL and chairman of the executive committee for ING Belgium.

ING Barings employs about 9,000 staff, including about 1,700 in the UK.

Sales surge fails to lift motor industry doubts

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

FRESH doubts emerged over the future of some of the best-known motor manufacturers last night amid forecasts of heavy falls in sales this year.

The motor industry, fresh from a successful sales year in 1998, is braced for an 8.8 per cent fall prompted by economic uncertainty.

A late flurry of sales activity in December lifted the number of registrations last year to 2.2 million, slightly below the record 2.3 million figure for 1999.

But manufacturers expect a sharp downturn this year to coincide with a series of mergers and takeovers involving

TOP TEN SELLING MODELS FOR 1998

1. Ford Fiesta
2. Ford Escort
3. Ford Mondeo
4. Vauxhall Vectra
5. Renault Megane

6. Vauxhall Astra
7. Vauxhall Corsa
8. Peugeot 306
9. Rover 200
10. Rover 400

some of the biggest names in the industry.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) admitted surprise yesterday at the late sales surge, which pushed December figures 13.8 per cent above the corresponding month in 1997.

However, they fear that a slowdown in 1999 is likely to take the gloss off the first year

in which new registration plates are issued twice, in March and September. Predictions of an 8.8 per cent fall would bring sales down to about 2.05 million.

Roger King, the SMMT's acting chief executive, said: "There will be a fall this year but we are not despondent because it comes after such good sales. We do expect a period of

consolidation among the manufacturers this year and there are clearly many more partnerships emerging between the main players.

"The effect of the plate change will take a while to work through the system, but eventually March may well become the lead month."

Ford took the first three places in the 1998 top sellers' list with its Fiesta, Escort and Mondeo models.

Ford was also the biggest-selling company overall last year, taking almost 17.9 per cent of the new car market. Vauxhall stayed in second place, with a 12.5 per cent share, while Rover held on to third spot despite its share dipping from 10 per cent in 1997 to 8.6 per cent in 1998.

Chicago clearing house in further \$2m loss

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

FUTURES traders struggling to recover at least half of their money from Griffin Trading, the collapsed clearing house, face a new hurdle after fresh losses of up to \$2 million (£1.1 million) emerged at the firm's head office in Chicago.

Investigations of events behind Griffin's bankruptcy are believed to have uncovered unauthorised trading by Scott Szach, its chief financial officer, which is estimated to have cost the firm between \$1.5 million and \$2 million.

It is not clear whether Mr Szach's alleged dealings are connected with John Park, the Korean-born trader, whose \$6.2 million losses on German government bonds forced Griffin and GLH (Derivatives), a trading firm of which he was a member, into insolvency just before Christmas.

Griffin's collapse has caused consternation on the London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (LIFFE). About 100 traders who used the clearing house have been temporarily forced out of business after a big chunk of their clients' money was taken by Mees Pierson, the Dutch bank which cleared deals on behalf of Griffin on Eurex, the German futures exchange. Despite this action, the bank is still facing losses of several million pounds.

Finbarr O'Connell, partner at accountants Grant Thornton and joint liquidator to Griffin, said \$3 million remained in the firm's client account in London.

Whether all of this was returned to traders depended on legal advice and their contracts, he said. The Securities and Futures Authority, however, said it would encourage an accelerated interim payout if there were difficulties.

The affair has shocked many traders, who mistakenly believed that client money had been "segregated" into separate accounts at Griffin, whereas in fact it had merely been ring-fenced from the firm's assets.



Acquisition trail: from left, Graeme Potts, Peter Vardy, chairman, and Ged Murray, finance director

Reg Vardy to spend £35m

REG VARDY intends to challenge Jardine Motors for the number two position in the car dealership industry by spending a further £35 million to snap up its smaller rivals (Fraser Nelson writes).

Graeme Potts, chief executive, said the company is looking for dealerships in Scotland, Yorkshire and the Midlands. It is also considering Birmingham and Brighton.

He said: "The market is consolidating, and this gives us opportunity to fill in the geographical gaps we have. The whole thing is still very fragmented; we are third-largest, with almost 70 dealerships and there are about 6,000 in the UK."

The new acquisitions would be funded by taking out extra borrowings.

Mr Potts said he is pre-

pared to increase gearing from 40 to 75 per cent, which would be £77 million.

Last year, it spent £35 million buying Trust Motors — comprising ten dealerships — and six other dealerships in England.

This helped pre-tax profits to £12.3 million (£8.41 million) in the six months to October 31 taking earnings to 14.7p (10.5p) per share. The interim dividend rises to 3.2p (2.8p).

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BP Amoco to shed 900 jobs in UK

BP AMOCO is shedding 900 jobs in the UK in a bid to restore profits in the upstream exploration business. Staff in Aberdeen and at Amoco's London office were given the news just days after the merger between the British and US oil companies became official. A spokesman for BP said that 200 jobs would be lost in onshore administrative and among technical staff in Aberdeen. A further 490 jobs will go at Amoco's UK headquarters at Hangar Lane in West London. Other jobs will be lost in Uxbridge, Middlesbrough, and elsewhere.

The redundancies announced yesterday are unlikely to be the end of the matter. BP has indicated that job losses are likely to be more than the 6,000 worldwide previously indicated. The speed with which Sir John Browne, chief executive, has wielded the axe indicates the sense of emergency at BP Amoco over the low oil price. Current estimates put the cost of producing a North Sea barrel at \$12. The oil price last night was \$11.67.

Wolseley US growth

WOLSELEY, the building merchants, has completed the acquisition of four American distribution businesses for \$68 million (£41 million). It said the businesses will add \$158 million to annual group sales, which stood at \$4.76 billion in 1998. The businesses include Fields & Co of Lubbock, a distributor based in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Alabama. Wolseley shares, which stood as high as 556p last year, rose from 362½p to 370p yesterday.

British Gas price cuts

GAS prices for about ten million customers are to fall by about 15 pence a year as British Gas starts a new charging plan. Households that pay quarterly bills on time will see bills cut by 2 pence in March. A further million who have pre-payment meters will have a reduction of 1.5 pence. Those paying by monthly direct debit, who have the cheapest tariffs, will have bills frozen. Separately, British Gas said it had recruited 800,000 electricity customers as deregulation in domestic power spreads.

BBA bug warning

UK BANKS have given warning that one in four small or medium-sized business are at "high risk" from the millennium bug because they have failed to identify the potential threat to their supply chains. A report by the British Bankers Association said that the wholesale and retail distribution sector is "particularly vulnerable". A BBA spokesman said: "Many businesses are making the mistake of regarding the year 2000 problem as solely an IT issue."

Leisure deal aborted

THE proposed takeover of Lady In Leisure, the operator of health and fitness clubs, by South Country Homes was aborted yesterday. Lady In Leisure, whose shares fell 17½p to 162½p yesterday, said the two companies had been unable to agree terms. Shares in South Country Homes remain suspended at 44½p as the company has entered negotiations over the reverse takeover of a private leisure business. The company said a further announcement was likely within four weeks.

P&O shares dip

SHARES of P&O fell 38½p to 635p despite an upbeat trading statement from the cruises division. Princess Cruises, based in America, lifted the passenger berth days sold in the fourth quarter to 1.2 million from 988,315 the previous year. P&O Cruises (UK) rose to 386,723 (224,450). P&O has increased capacity for 1999 and says bookings are ahead of last year. However, analysts have cut profit forecasts because of worries that the company is failing to sell enough high-yield, long-distance cruises.

Methven's open offer

METHVEN'S, the retail bookseller, is raising £1.6 million through a placing and open offer at 30p per share to fund new branch openings. The company reported pre-tax losses of £23,000 for the year ended September 30, compared with a loss of £5,000 last time. Turnover was up 44 per cent at £5.2 million and like-for-like sales were up 10.7 per cent. There is again no dividend. Exceptional costs were £113,000, with the company's bookshops increasing from five to eight.

Abbey issues warning

ABBEY, the property and plant hire group based in the Irish Republic, reported improved interim results, but, in order to curb the "irrational exuberance" of some analysts, issued a profits warning for the second half. Pre-tax profit was £19.9 million (£8.8 million) for the six months to October 31, from £17.6 million last time. Earnings per share were £17.56p (£13.08p) and turnover was £144.7 million (£139.8 million). The interim dividend is up 17 per cent at 13.5p.

Bank	Buy	Sell	Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.70	2.52	Japan Yen	198.60	181.10
Austria Sch	20.48	18.82	Malta	0.659	0.62
Belgium Fr	60.28	55.32	Netherlands Gld	3.310	3.05
Canada \$	2.615	2.427	New Zealand \$	3.19	2.95
Cyprus Cyp £	0.8864	0.7949	Norway Kr	12.85	12.51
Denmark Kr	11.12	10.22	Portugal Esc	202.29	274.29
Egypt	5.21	5.20	S Africa R	10.27	9.31
Finland Mk	8.96	8.21	Spain Ptas	246.96	228.17
France Fr	9.75	8.97	Sweden Kr	13.82	12.72
Germany Dm	2.931	2.689	Switzerland Fr	2.441	2.223
Greece Dr	498	447	Turkey Lira	543357	50722
Hong Kong \$	13.60	12.40	USA \$	1.755	1.612
Iceland	127	107			
Indonesia	18810	11810			
Ireland P	4.189	1.081			
Israel Shk	7.06	6.40			
Italy Lira	2514	2071			

Bank of small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Base Rate

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited announces that its base rate has changed from 6.25% to 6% p.a. with effect from close of business on 7th January 1999.

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Good News For NatWest Small Business Customers

Interest rates applicable to Business Overdraft Agreements, Business Loan Agreements* and Flexible Business Loan Agreements* are reduced by 1/4% per annum with effect from 8 January 1999.

*This notice does not apply to agreements which specify the rate as fixed or linked to Base Rate.



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Girobank

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Girobank plc. Registered in England No. 1850000. Registered Office: 49 Park Lane, London W1Y 4EQ. A subsidiary of Alliance & Leicester plc.

Interest rate change

Allied Irish Bank (GB) announces that with effect from close of business on 7 January 1999 its Base Rate was decreased from 6.25% to 6.00% p.a.

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Barclays Base Rate Change

Barclays Bank PLC announces that with effect from 7th January 1999, its Base Rate has reduced from 6.25% to 6.00%



BARCLAYS BANK PLC
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REGISTERED NUMBER 1026167.

Bank of Ireland

Doves in full flight

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor



The Monetary Policy Committee has been turned into a dove. Yesterday's cut in interest rates, although but a meagre quarter of a per cent, was the fourth in succession. It came despite some statistics which might have enabled any lingering hawks to argue in favour of a month of wait and see. But the fact is that even the most inflation-fearing of economists cannot now snuff out a whiff of that danger in the UK economy: the latest cut is evidence of the MPC's acknowledgement that recession looms.

The quarter per cent, and the prospect of a weaker pound which it should bring with it, will not be enough to silence the bearings of manufacturers. They fear that the MPC will suspect that it has gone too far and take remedial action. Nonetheless, the rapid moves of the building societies to cut their rates was greeted with glee and the suggestion that there might be a rapid transfer of that excitement to the high street stores.

Some hope. While almost 11 million mortgages affect the spending patterns of the nation, there are many more people who are lenders rather than borrowers. For the holders of the 40 million savings accounts in the country, another cut in interest rates is anything but good news.

For those whose lifestyle depends on income from their sav-

ings, a spot of retail therapy to brighten a gloomy January, for themselves and the struggling retailers, is now even less likely to figure on the agenda. The beneficiaries of higher interest rates tend to be ignored in the economic debate but the growing proportion of pensioners in the country adds to their numbers daily.

Many of the elderly who chose to put their money into the stock market instead of the building society are already seeing their spending power hacked away. Before his unimpeachable departure from the office of Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson ruled that non-tax paying pensioners should no longer be able to claw back the advance corporation tax on their share dividends.

Those who benefit from multi-million off-shore trust funds do not need to worry about such sums but for pensioners on limited incomes, and without generous friends to loan them hundreds of thousands of pounds without worrying about the interest, the financial future is looking ever more bleak.

Withdrawing the tax concession was a mean move which, in Mr Robinson's absence, should be reconsidered. Not that sensi-

ble pensioners may want to risk their money in the stock market, anyhow. Yesterday's bout of profit-taking, reversing much of the previous day's gain, indicated just how wary investors are of the ability of share prices to continue to defy gravity.

As the MPC's decision implies, the world slowdown is inevitably affecting the UK. Falling corporate earnings will sooner or later have to be reflected in share prices.

Working time rule can damage health

The Working Time Directive is one of those pieces of legislation whose full impact takes time to dawn. When this European brainwave was absorbed into UK law last year, the protests were fairly muted. Now, however, the huge costs inherent in its implementation are hitting home and they go well beyond the massive increase in firm-

ing that was one of the first consequences to be felt, often by small businesses which do not have the spare administrative capacity to cope with yet another bureaucratic demand. Government pledges to cut red tape have been buried under the sheaves of extra paperwork that the Directive is forcing onto companies.

But the extra burden falls not merely on the commercial sector. As Frank Dobson tries to persuade us that the current crisis in the National Health Service is all the fault of Sydney Yu, the Directive is actually wreaking havoc on the already over-stretched finances of the NHS.

The obligation to provide agency workers with virtually all the benefits of being full-time employees has disastrous implications for the Health Service. Private nursing homes are finding that the costs of hiring agency nurses are close to doubling, in some cases, because of the increased obligations to provide

for them. The shortage of nurses in the NHS already drives it to use more and more agency staff — at least one in eight nurses in NHS trusts is now likely to come through an agency. What the Working Time Directive does is make it increasingly attractive for nurses to opt for the flexibility of working through an agency rather than for an NHS trust.

The wage bill is, therefore, set to ratchet up even further. While some hospitals aim to solve the problem by flying in contingents of eager Philipinos desperate to hit the wards, over all Mr Dobson seems to have no choice but to accept that the NHS will be employing more and more nurses through private sector agencies. Yet in other areas, he seems keen to cut back on co-operation between the public and the private sector in matters of health. The drive to cut waiting lists might have been accomplished even faster had the NHS been prepared to sub-contract

more simple operations to efficient private hospitals.

This is just one of the areas which the Select Committee on Health might probe as it studies the submissions, due in by next Friday, from the private sector. More cooperation rather than less should be the aim.

No one left to carry the can

Doctors bury their mistakes, bankers merely leave them behind when they move to another job. It is no good blaming the current regime at Barclays, or even the recently departed Martin Taylor, for the errors that led it to pay out £116 million to the administrators of British & Commonwealth. The head of Barclays in those days, Sir John Quinlan, now heads the FA Premier League, while the then head of BZW, Sir Martin Jacob, is chairman of the Pru and the merchant banker who advised B&C to buy Atlantic, Richard Heley, is now at Charterhouse. So Barclays ends up out of pocket with no one to carry the can.

John Gunn knows who to blame, though. The B&C boss

points out that now Barclays and co have settled with the administrators, all the secured creditors will get back 100p in the pound, while unsecured creditors will get at least 85p. Given the displacement that always happens during administration, this indicates that B&C may have been solvent, even after writing off its losses on Atlantic.

Gunn has long maintained that Midland Bank pulled the plug on B&C in order to try and stop the legal action against its merchant banking arm, Samuel Montagu, over the Quadrex débacle. If so, the strategy failed, as the administrators carried on suing and ultimately won £172 million from HSBC, by then owner of Midland. Naturally, Sir Kit McMahon, Midland's boss in those days, has long moved on.

Bug worries

WITH less than a year to go, the British Bankers' Association has come to the view that business is not taking the prospective bite of the millennium bug seriously enough. Its message is that fears over cost should not deter companies from taking steps to ward off the potential problem, although there are no promises of preferential borrowing rates for those with bug problems. Wary businesses may suspect that owing up to their bug difficulties will result not in sympathy but a withdrawal of all credit.

Digital television forecast

More than 5.6 million homes in the UK will have digital satellite television by 2008, according to Baskerville Communications, the international market information group. The company, which is based in California, believes that the UK will have the highest penetration of digital satellite in the world by 2008 and by then will be generating revenues of \$4 billion (£2.4 billion) a year. By then the company expects 45.8 per cent of UK homes to have multi-channel television.

The UK forecasts are part of an international study, Global Digital Satellite TV. Baskerville predicts that digital satellite will show rapid growth over the next decade and will rise from 16.8 million to 61 million worldwide by 2008. Total revenues are forecast to hit \$38.6 billion a year. The US is expected to account for more than 28 per cent of the total.

Peptide positive
Peptide Therapeutics, the vaccine company that needs to raise new money to finance its proposed £9 million acquisition of OraVax, announced positive results from phase II studies of its typhoid vaccine and its hayfever treatment. John Brown, chief executive, said the oral typhoid vaccine results were "all we could have hoped for". However, the hayfever treatment, under option to SmithKline Beecham, was only effective for severe sufferers.

Shire's early start
Shire Pharmaceuticals is to make an early start on phase III trials of its treatment for high blood phosphate levels after a positive interim analysis of a phase II study. However, the application for US marketing approval for galantamine, its treatment for Alzheimer's disease, has been delayed to allow time to assemble a comprehensive filing dossier.

Gent stays away as MCI WorldCom enters the fray

CHRIS GENT, chief executive of Vodafone, is refusing to shorten his holiday in the antipodes despite fears yesterday that the mobile phone group's attempt to walk off with the US operator AirTouch looks set to be hijacked by a counter offer from MCI WorldCom.

The emergence of interest from MCI WorldCom means that AirTouch is now being pursued by three suitors having initially been close to concluding an agreement with Bell Atlantic. That number could rise to four as Wall Street is now also awaiting an offer for AirTouch from Mannesmann, the expanding German media group.

Bernie Ebbers, chief executive of MCI WorldCom and the man who broke up British Telecom's attempts to buy MCI two years ago, is said to have held meetings with advisers and bankers. Jack Grubman, the analyst at Salomon Smith Barney, who is close to Mr Ebbers, has raised his target price for AirTouch to \$60 billion (£36 billion).

Mr Gent is understood to have dispatched Ken Hydon,



Ebbers raised target price

his finance director, to San Francisco to initiate discussions for a \$60 billion merger with AirTouch, which, if successful, could result in Vodafone becoming larger, by market capitalisation, than BT.

Mr Gent, 50, a keen cricket fan who is in New Zealand after watching the end of the Test series in Australia, is expected to return to the UK at the weekend.

One company source said: "It's not as though [Mr Gent]

is on safari. He's in contact. It's a situation he's been close to for the past 18 months, and there is game-plan in place. There's nothing he can do at this stage that the team can't."

Vodafone has not ruled out raising its bid, said by some to be as much as \$55 million, while Bell Atlantic is thought to be unwilling to go much beyond the \$45 billion it has already offered.

One Vodafone source, however, said: "There is a price at which we will walk away."

With the entry of Mr Ebbers, the scene is now set for a protracted bid battle.

Mr Ebbers is one of corporate America's most experienced artists in the takeover arena having prior to the MCI deal built up WorldCom through some 50 acquisitions. Mr Ebbers is seen by some as acting now toward AirTouch in much the same fashion as when he trumped BT in its \$40 million takeover of MCI.

The move, however, stunned some analysts who said that he had previously stated that he had no interest in buying a mobile phone company.

Texaco to cut spending

TEXACO, the American oil company with significant interests in the North Sea, is to reduce capital spending in 1999 by \$600 million (£364 million) to \$3.7 billion from a planned \$4.3 billion and accelerate a \$650 million cost-cutting programme as a result of continued weak oil prices.

Peter Bijur, chairman and chief executive officer, said: "Given this period of low energy prices, our revised spending plan, together with our cost and expense reduction programme, are appropriate actions."

UK businesses will suffer in wake of new currency

By SAEED SHAH

UK companies are less prepared for the euro than their continental counterparts and will suffer as a result, according to a survey of UK and European equity analysts.

The study, by Deloitte Consulting, found that 43 per cent of UK analysts think companies in their sector do not have a clear view of how the euro will affect their business, compared with 27 per cent of European analysts.

Hans Christian Iversen, a partner at Deloitte, said: "UK companies especially have no

plan and no allocated resources for adapting to the euro and are waiting for a government decision to join before they act. "Unfortunately, UK companies cannot avoid the issue. Analysts are already factoring in the implications of the euro on their ratings of sectors and individual companies."

More than two thirds of UK analysts said companies in their sector had not made them explicitly aware of their euro strategies, compared with a third of European analysts.

The biggest area of concern for analysts is that companies have not resolved the pricing implications of the euro and, for UK analysts, the IT requirements of the euro.

In the short term, 85 per cent of both sets of analysts believe the euro will involve substantial costs to companies and 78 per cent think that margins will be damaged. However, in the medium term, 79 per cent of all analysts believe the euro will have a positive impact on the European business environment.

Strong trading for niche duo

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM, RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

TWO niche retailers, Clinton Cards and Electronics Boutique, reported strong Christmas trading yesterday.

Clinton Cards said it had enjoyed strong growth in sales over the festive season as cards remained a popular purchase with otherwise cautious shoppers. Like-for-like sales at the stores in the five weeks to January 3 rose 11.4 per cent, while total sales up Clinton's 518 shops was up 22.9 per cent.

The group was vague

about trading at the 206 Greetings Store Group shops it took over last October, saying only that sales were "in line with the board's expectations". It said it will spend this year improving the layout of these shops and their stock ranges.

Electronics Boutique, which specialises in computer software and video games, said that its like-for-like sales rose 11 per cent, with total sales up 31 per cent on last year in the five weeks to January 2.

John Steinbrecher, chief executive, said that Sony PlayStation consoles had sold well, as had the *Fifa 99*, *Tomb Raider 3* and *Legend of Zelda* software titles.

Sims chief shuts down own office

THE chief executive of Sims Food, the supplier of burgers to Burger King, has effectively put himself out of work by deciding to close the company's head office (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Stephen Collier, brought in to run the company in 1995 after it was nearly sunk by the BSE crisis, said that the closure of the Milton Keynes office would save more than £500,000 a year. It will cost £300,000. Mr Collier also said that annual pre-tax profits will "substantially exceed market expectations".

Mr Collier will look for a new job when he leaves Sims at the end of March. The work done in Milton Keynes will be transferred to the factory in Hull, where Paul Harrison will become managing director.

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Base Rate

Bank of Scotland announces that with effect from Thursday 7th January 1999 its Base Rate has been decreased from 6.25% per annum to 6.00% per annum.

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Lloyds Bank Plc has decreased its Base Rate to 6.00 per cent p.a. from 6.25 per cent p.a. with effect from close of business, Thursday 7th January 1999.

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NatWest Business Deposit Interest Rates

NatWest announces the following interest rates, effective from 8 January 1999:

Savings Reserve Accounts					
Overdraft Rate (per annum %)	APR (%)	Balance	Overdraft Rate (per annum %)	APR (%)	
4.45	4.52	Instant access - interest paid quarterly	4.20	4.27	
4.40	4.47	£100,000 - £249,999	4.15	4.22	
4.00	4.06	£250,000 - £99,999	3.75	3.80	
3.50	3.55	£2,000 - £24,999	3.25	3.29	
3.00	3.03	£500 - £1,999	2.75	2.78	
1.75	1.76	£0 - £499	1.50	1.51	

Where appropriate, you will be deducted of source from interest credited or paid. The Annual Equivalent Rate (AER) is a national rate which shows the gross interest rate as if paid and compounded on an annual basis.



National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BP

Informative:

First Direct Base Rate

With effect from 7 January 1999, First Direct Base Rate has been decreased by 0.25% from 6.25% p.a. to 6.00% p.a.

HomeOwner Reserve

With effect from 7 January 1999, the HomeOwner Reserve interest rate has been decreased by 0.25% to 12.25% p.a. (APR 12.7%).

Visa Card

With effect from 22 January 1999, the Visa Card interest rate will be reduced from 1.50% to 1.45% per month (APR 18.8%) for purchases and (APR 20.9%) for cash advances.

First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc

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Mid-rank ministers are key to success

It is hard to remember in these post-Mandelson days that it was once the Department of Social Security that provided the Government with its biggest headache. Harriet Harman, the former Secretary of State for Social Security, quickly acquired a reputation as an ineffectual minister. Frank Field, the independent-minded MP brought in to "think the unthinkable" on pensions and welfare reform, was at constant loggerheads with the Treasury over his ideas. After a full year in Government, Labour had made no progress on fulfilling one of its main manifesto commitments, leaving the pensions and insurance industry complaining bitterly that the Government was going round in circles.

Middle earners are to be encouraged — but not compelled — to take out private provision while tax perks for upper earners have been left untouched. So far, so good. The reform plans, while not quite living up to the hype of a radical overhaul of the pensions system, were relatively well received. Mr Darling was able to put the plans aside and turn his attention to the next tricky task of welfare reform.

Yet the Green Paper is far from the finished product. Senior ministers naturally want to reveal in the excitement of a new policy and then move on. Most of government, however, is the tedious job of turning these plans into legislative and executive reality. A failure to complete the details has damaging practical consequences for business and consumers, effectively introducing "policy blight" into the system. The very real long-term consequences of failing to turn broad-brush reforms into hard policy are likely to prove far more damaging than the fall-out from feuding spin-doctors.

The pensions reform plans are just such a case. The Green Paper indicates that smaller companies that do not offer company pension plans will have to provide access to stakeholder pensions. Employers will be landed with extra costs, but with no clear expression of how this proposal will work in practice, there is little they can do in the way of preparation.



ALASTAIR MURRAY

The plans have had a negative impact on the pensions industry itself. The Government, by announcing the introduction of high-standard stakeholder pensions, has made it extremely difficult to sell existing pensions. Not surprisingly, consumers are reluctant to rush into such a fundamental financial commitment when a greatly improved product may be available in the near future. At the same time, there has been insufficient guidance on the style of the new stakeholder pensions for the industry to begin the complex task of designing new products. The pension companies are especially taxed by the idea of a capped maximum charge rate. They argue it will hurt their bottom lines to such a degree

that the reform will prove counterproductive and force companies out of the middle earnings pension market. It is not Alastair Darling, however, who has the vital task of resolving these problems but Stephen Timmins, the newly appointed Minister of State for Welfare Reform. The new Pensions Minister is hardly a household name. His previous claim to fame was winning the East Ham by-election in 1994 with a remarkable 75 per cent of the vote after his Liberal Democrat opponent defected to Labour on the eve of the poll.

For all Mr Timmins's anonymity, it has been a remarkably swift rise for a man regarded as a staunch Blairite loyalist. He only entered the Government in the last full reshuffle when he was made Junior Minister at the DSS. He has now become an indirect beneficiary of the fall-out from the Mandelson scandal, filling the vacancy left by John Denham, who has moved to become Health Minister. Fine-tuning the details on pension reform does not seem like a sure-fire way of making further progress to the top. However, if Labour is serious about putting substance first, it is the performance of the mid-ranking ministers that should become a main focus of attention.

Buffeted boat industry stays buoyant in face of stormy sea

UK builders are at full throttle to attract a new wave of buyers, says Kimberly McDonald

Pop stars do it. Footballers do it. Even the Prince of Wales tried it. Now the UK boat-building industry is following suit and undergoing its own makeover attempt.

Once a highly coveted symbol of wealth and glamour, boating began to nosedive a few years ago. Women didn't want to know about boats and young people shied away from a pastime with an image suggesting gin and tonics and /3 DROPHOWARD'S Way. Last year, the British Marine Industries Federation (BMIF) listed 180 pastimes, from parasailing to Zen Buddhism, to which boating was losing ground.

The high pound during 1998 caused a serious blow to exports and the business equipment among boat builders and equipment suppliers was extreme pessimism.

The tone at this year's London International Boat Show, which opened at Earls Court yesterday, is notably more optimistic. The pound has retreated to more reasonable levels, prompting an increase in sales. Last September was a turning-point for the industry, and sales late last year picked up 10 per cent higher in the latter part of 1998 compared to early 1998.

Boating equipment sales, which declined 14 per cent in 1997, have increased in the second half of 1998. That has done much to spur optimism in the UK industry, despite an expected economic slowdown.

In its latest biannual industry trends survey, the BMIF, which organises the London Boat Show, reports that its members, whilst being prepared for a drop in consumer confidence and spending, are more optimistic about the market as a whole than they were in the previous six months, with exporters being particularly upbeat about the future. The UK's big powerboat manufacturers, such as



Pull steam ahead: the UK industry is targeting first-time buyers with entry-level boats to complement sales of vessels such as this Sunseeker Predator 63

Fairline, Princess and Sunseeker, seem to be holding on to their European sales.

But the industry still faces many challenges. Topper International, one of the best known names in British yachting, and Victoria Yacht, had to withdraw from the Boat Show because of financial difficulties. Despite being a regular fixture at the show, Topper's continuing financial troubles and the company's voluntary arrangement with creditors to avoid receivership, prevented its participation this year.

While boat builders take some solace in the home market, the high pound is still hurting profits at the main British builders, who rely heavily on exports. The damage is twofold: making their products more expensive in overseas markets; and attracting cheap imports from Europe and the US to compete with them on home territory. The greatest competition comes from France, where well-made cheaper boats are becoming a force to be reckoned with.

"On a value basis, it's hard

for customers to ignore the sailboats from France," said Tony Beechey, executive chairman of BMIF. UK manufacturers also have little scope to lower prices.

"There is a strong element of realism that many companies, while continuing plans for capital expenditure and investment, expect to have to increase their prices in the next six months," Mr Beechey said.

In America, home of the world's biggest boat industry, sales have trailed off slightly. While recreational spending has grown by more than 50 per cent in seven years, boating's share has shrunk from 3.8 per cent to 2.1 per cent. A recent US report showed that, in 1994, owning a boat came sixth on a "wish list" of consumer preferences. Fourteen years later, it came 15th.

With domestic interest on the wane, US companies are intensifying their overseas focus, posing a serious competitive challenge for British builders, particularly in the sportsboat market. US sports boats are built in huge numbers, so quantity keeps prices down. These boats are not

only stylish but also cheaper, given the pound's current level, hurting Britain's main sports boat builders such as Fletcher and Shakespeare. Fighting competitive pricing is one thing.

Fighting old perceptions is another. Attendance at the Boat Show is expected to run at least 10 per cent above last year's level, but a survey of seven boat shows on three continents indicates a steady decline in interest. Over six years, more than 150,000 people decided to give their local show a miss.

In addition to changing perceptions, customer spending patterns have shifted as well. Boat designs have become standardised, allowing higher-volume production. Standardisation means that designs do not date so quickly and resale values remain high. So owners keep their boats longer, with more of them upgrading the kit and rigging of their craft.

For younger families, boating is far too time-consuming and expensive. Over 20 years, the price of a small cruiser has

risen by more than double the inflation rate. Seadogs, consequently, are getting older: 46 per cent of sailors and 35 per cent of motor boat users are aged over 55.

With these disheartening demographics as a backdrop, the BMIF launched its new Big Blue brand for all national boat shows. The "Big Blue Experience" makes its debut this year, and features a host of promotions, from fashion shows to watersports simulators, to create and attract a new generation of watersports enthusiasts. Forget the image of stodgy seafarers, said Colin Campbell of Big Blue: "The Experience will be run by enthusiastic young boaters whose aim is to prove that boating has something to offer people of all ages."

The industry is changing the way it does business, focusing more sharply on the customers' needs and individualised service.

Doing whatever it takes to retain customers and interest is crucial for the boating industry, which cannot afford to lose its loyal UK customer base. Unlike

motorists, boat owners overwhelmingly buy British, with 85 per cent of new boats purchased from UK yards. While more than two thirds of boat sales are in the second-hand market, more people are being drawn into buying new as the supply of good quality second-hand craft starts to dry up. Builders are praying this trend continues.

Though the sign outside the BMIF reads "Wanted: Young People", it is the sophisticated Monte Carlo cruisers who have been the loyal buyers, not the more fickle younger generation. After all, with a top-of-the-range Sunseeker running at £2 million and even the more moderate flybridge cruisers from top builders such as Fairline, Marine Projects, and Sealine, costing upwards of £200,000, it's clear who the target audience is. But, there's a more concerted effort this year to attract first-time buyers with affordable good-value entry-level boats.

If value doesn't work, the BMIF is throwing in young models dancing under bright lights on a smoke-filled stage. Just in case.

High-flyer brought down over Atlantic

Jason Nissé on John Gunn's efforts to keep his career afloat after the collapse of B&C

It is hardly much consolation. But more than ten years after making the decision that ruined his career, John Gunn believes he has proof that he was duped.

The former chairman of British & Commonwealth Holdings has long borne the responsibility for B&C's £408 million purchase of Atlantic Computers, the leasing group, in 1988. That deal led within two years to the £1.3 billion collapse of B&C, one of the largest financial disasters in British corporate history. This in turn led to a Department of Trade and Industry investigation, and an attempt to have Gunn struck off as a director, which led to a court case that Gunn, along with Rusty Ashman, B&C's finance director, and John Penny, Atlantic's sales director, won last June.

The settlement of the long-standing and complex legal action over the Atlantic deal lays the blame squarely at the feet of BZW (now Barclays Capital) and Coopers & Lybrand (now PricewaterhouseCoopers), which advised B&C, and Spicer & Oppenheim (now Deloitte & Touche) and NM Rothschild (which thankfully has not been bought, merged or changed its name). Atlantic's auditors and merchant bankers. Though they admit no liability in the settlements, Gunn argues that if these venerable City firms had not given Atlantic a clean bill of health in 1988 (when it was already becoming apparent that it was built on foundations of straw) B&C would never have bought it.

It also means that a large proportion of B&C creditors will be paid dividends of 100p in the pound, something that Gunn says proves his argument that B&C should never have been put into administration in the first place.

It is a rather pyrrhic victory for Gunn, who celebrates his 57th birthday next week. "My emotions are a bit

mixed," he said. "It's clear at the time the decision to pull the plug was a mistake. It has ruined a lot of shareholders and ruined a lot of people's lives."

Certainly Gunn's career was not helped. The son of the Cheshire railwayman worked his way up through the foreign exchange department of Barclays Bank and the world of moneybroking, and was a City high-flyer when the Atlantic deal was struck. He had left Exco, the moneybroker, in 1986 to take charge of B&C, which was then an investment vehicle for the Cayzer family. In just a few years he transformed it into the UK's largest financial services conglomerate. He earned nearly £1 million a year and purchased a huge home in Holland Park, known for its ballroom.

Gunn stayed with B&C for a year or so after its collapse, helping the administrators, Nigel Hamilton and Stephen Adamson, of Ernst & Young, to sell the main businesses, which included Gartmore and Oppenheim & Co, the fund managers, Celltech, the biotechnology start-up, and Exco, Gunn's old business. Adamson has always been complimentary about Gunn, supporting him in his fight against the DTI and admitting that Ernst & Young advised the banks against pulling the plug on B&C.

Gunn has rebuilt his career after a fashion. Though the DTI action prevented him from joining the board of Chelsea Village, owner of the Premiership football club, subsequent events there have made this a blessing in disguise. He now runs a small merchant bank, but is not registered with the Securities & Futures Authority. Another case of regulators blaming him for B&C? No. "I just thought I was a bit old to take the exams," he said.

Italian job

THE latest horse-trading in euroland looks set to put a Frenchman in charge of the powerful Economic and Finance Committee, which used to trade as the plain old Monetary Committee, to succeed Sir Nigel Wicks, Gordon Brown's main man in the EU. Wicks has stood down as chairman, and Jean Lemierre, a French Treasury civil servant, is expected to take over at this month's meeting.

This being the EU, the whole thing is the result of a shabby carve-up, inevitably. Mario Draghi, head of the Italian Treasury, was up for the job,

but the rumour is that he has decided to withdraw in return for French support for an Italian in an even bigger EU post.

Jacques Santer may stand down this year as head of the Commission, and the man with his eye on this job is Romano Prodi, former Italian Prime Minister. The Italians rather hope the French can deliver the job. If Lemierre gets to take over this would be some consolation for the failure of Jean-Claude Trichet to take over the European Central Bank, my source says. The incumbent president, Wim Duisenberg, recently refused to go early, you may recall.

I am told, however, that Trichet was never in the running. The talk is that the Governor of the Bank of France is too heavily implicated in the collapse of the Credit Lyonnais bank, so all the fuss over him succeeding Duisenberg was a smoke-screen.

What a shower. BAD luck to Stephen Adamson, corporate recovery guru at Ernst & Young, who for five years has pursued those responsible for the collapse of British & Commonwealth on behalf of the creditors. The final settlement with Barclays Bank and the rest was at last announced yesterday, and he was in Thailand. Sunning himself on the beach?



"I'll move a quarter of a per cent — that's a significant amount for you"



Alas, not Adamson has been charged with clearing up after the collapse of the state-owned timber corporation.

Mapped out

AS ONE who shares his passion for maps, I can only admire the 20 years of effort by Philip Wood, head of the banking department at City lawyers Allen & Overy, that went into *Maps of World Financial Law*, a slim but colourful volume that shows how the 300 or more jurisdictions around the globe view various transactions. The 21 maps are in full colour and are clearly a labour of love — Wood says he enjoyed the colouring in, even if this was achieved by computer rather than crayon. "For people who are trying to do deals worldwide, it's a nightmare," he says.

He is particularly proud of Map 21, on global netting, which shows your chances of recovering a debt against a matching liability in various countries, the product of two decades of globe-trotting research. Memo: avoid the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

Drug-crazed

MOST pharmaceutical research notes might as well be written in Estonian as far as I am concerned. So I felt a twinge of sympathy for whoever was responsible for Shire Pharmaceuticals' update on its treatment for high phosphate levels in the blood.

Some sort of computer glitch meant that the research team's notes were garbled and then squashed down the line instead of the finished version. "Compare to normal levels of phosphate found in the blood?" it says at one point, along with various other esoteric stage directions.

I ask if the finished version made any more sense. "Probably," comes the answer. "Almost definitely."

THE clock is ticking for the Heathrow 12 plus guinea pig. Mario Avagliano pleaded guilty to importing the beasts and to charges of cruelty to animals yesterday and was jailed for six weeks and fined £1,000. Readers of yesterday's column will know that the animals are at the Corporation of London's reception centre at Heathrow, waiting to serve six months in quarantine. The end of the trial now means they



Bismarck: fondly remembered. It seems, by the French banks

Coutts & Co Base Rate

With effect from Thursday 7 January 1999 Coutts & Co's Base Rate changed from 6.25% to 6.00% p.a.

Coutts & Co's Mortgage Reserve Account Managed Borrowing Rate also changed from 7.70% to 7.45% p.a.



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THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 8 1999

هكذا من رايه

Equities come off the boil

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

[illegible][illegible]

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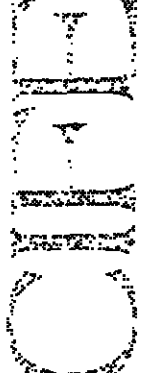
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Teachers who train must try harder

Trainees are being cheated by tutors, argues Elizabeth Kelly

The new year has opened as the last one ended, with claims that the shortage of teachers is becoming more critical. One of the reasons for this is that some teachers prefer life away from the school classroom. Why is this?

I qualified as a secondary school English teacher in 1996. I took the course at a top university department of education which has now received a clean bill of health from Ofsted. About half my training took place in schools, where I was under the supervision of expert practising teachers. The rest of my time was spent at university, under the dubious guidance of the English faculty.

I came across dedicated staff, but the faculty mostly consisted of disillusioned former teachers. Responsible for turning out a new generation of English teachers, they were role models with a duty to encourage and inspire. Sadly, it appeared that they had opted for teacher training not so much from a passion for their profession but as a desire to escape from it.

Despite regular school visits and bouts of teaching, the faculty staff seemed out of touch with the problems facing trainees. I began my Postgraduate Certificate in Education at a time when fundamental elements of education were in a state of upheaval. Yet instead of confronting these issues, the staff either evaded or ridiculed them. Sneering at the national curriculum, and at the Conservative Government, which

had introduced it, was one of the faculty's favourite pastimes.

Discipline — one of a trainee's most pressing concerns — was considered a dirty word. However, a teacher cannot teach unless a class is orderly. When we asked for advice on how to deal with unruly students, we were fobbed off with the advice "avoid confrontation". We were expected to accommodate indiscipline, rather than to impose discipline.

In refusing to acknowledge the real pressures placed on trainees, the staff failed to meet our needs. Similarly, I believe that the course failed to attend to the needs of the children we were being trained to teach.

While the course syllabus appeared to address the needs of the national curriculum, our training was subject to the whims and personal opinions of the staff. The faculty promoted a liberal, non-competitive system of education that prized creativity far above essential writing skills. The fact that such a view is at odds with the English curriculum and the demands of the real world did not bother them. The obligation to prepare students for the workplace was



Rules made to be broken: some teacher-trainers consider discipline a dirty word yet teachers must learn to impose it

students were easily influenced on this matter. One, posted to a particularly tough comprehensive, remarked that she really could see no point in teaching punctuation. If her students learnt to express themselves, that was enough.

I found this attitude alarming. What right did we have to deprive any student of basic writing skills? And how were we helping students to express themselves if we denied them access to the intrinsic tools of self-expression? As well as being defeatist, such low aspirations were, I thought, harmful to their job prospects.

Not only did the faculty promote a veto on the teaching of grammar and punctuation, it tried to shift the responsibility to other departments. History and even science teachers, ar-

gued one tutor, all had a duty to help to improve student literacy. This would release overburdened English teachers to address neglected topics, such as media.

The fact that media study, as yet, plays a minor role in the English curriculum, did not deter our tutors from plugging it continually. Days were set aside for its consideration. In contrast, grammar and punctuation scarcely commanded a single seminar.

Media, it was argued, were not only more accessible than much of the "classic" literature set for study, but also more relevant. According to one tutor, television's *EastEnders* was of greater relevance to the lives of most students than Shake-

speare. Why then should he take precedence?

Central to the faculty's philosophy was the concept of "social justice in education". Issues of social justice were, however, often promoted at the expense of education, defeating the purpose of our training. Media seminars were manipulated as a vehicle for airing political views.

The faculty was hostile to convention and tradition. Established and often highly effective teaching methods were rejected in favour of a progressive approach called differentiation. This required the teacher to replace whole-class teaching with group tasks, adapted to the abilities of the students.

Although attractive in theory, differentiation was inefficient and frustrating in prac-

tice. It virtually disempowered the teacher, who could do little more than assist while students muddled through their assignments. I enrolled on my course because I wanted to teach, not merely facilitate. I set out hoping to be enlightened; I left disenchanted.

Teacher-trainers occupy a privileged position. They are unburdened by the daily pressures of the classroom, and so they have the power to influence the course of education. The quality of their instruction is crucial in encouraging teachers to stay in the profession. Trainers have every right to question government policy, but they also have a duty to provide constructive, impartial guidance and a worthwhile course that prepares trainees for the real demands of teaching.

Finding jobs for the independent boys and girls

Public schools need advice on careers too, says Bruce Kemble

For the past decade, Graham Searle has helped thousands of independent pupils with their most crucial decision when they leave the schoolroom — choosing a career.

Mr Searle has been the national director of the Independent School Careers Organisation (Isco), based at Camberley in Surrey, which was set up by the Headmaster's Conference at the start of the Second World War. Heads felt that boys needed help getting jobs. "It was just boys in those days," he says. "But now we advise as many, if not more, girls."

It may seem incongruous to give careers advice to pupils from the ancient public schools who clearly have a head start when it comes to networking. "I doubt whether this was ever true," he says. "But it is even less true today than it was then. However, to suggest that anyone is bound to get a job simply because they have been to an independent school is no longer the case. Firms are looking for people who can do the job, not where they came from."

Mr Searle, 60, who retired in September, organised 13,000 aptitude tests a year for 15 to 16-year-olds and interviews with about 7,000. Isco staff go over the results to help pupils in their A-level choices or they help sixth-formers to choose a university. Although 95 per cent of Isco candidates go on to higher education, the remainder receive careers advice when they go straight from school to work.

Mr Searle says: "There have

always been a few firms, such as Marks & Spencer, that take people with only A levels, but the run-of-the-mill leavers from an independent school still want to go to university."

Isco lays on about 150 courses a year that show teenagers what a job involves, ranging from hotel management at the Savoy to nursery nursing at Norland and horse-racing management at Goodwood. The closing date for applications for most of the Easter courses is Friday, January 22.

Mr Searle has noticed that an increasing number of firms refuse to recruit anyone who does not have a degree. "If you are going to read a straight academic subject, the best place for you is a traditional university with high academic standards: remembering that Warwick and York are as difficult to get into as Oxford or Cambridge."

"If you are looking for something vocational, there are many places that will be exactly what your employer is looking for. For example, Marks & Spencer will look at someone with a vocational degree in retail selling from Bournemouth or Manchester Metropolitan."

On the key question of how to choose your university, he is very clear. "You can do a lot of the preliminaries without visiting anywhere at all. One of the key factors is what grades you are likely to get. You can apply to six universities, but it would be optimistic to think that you would visit them all. I do not think you should accept an offer from a university you have not visited. That would be very silly."



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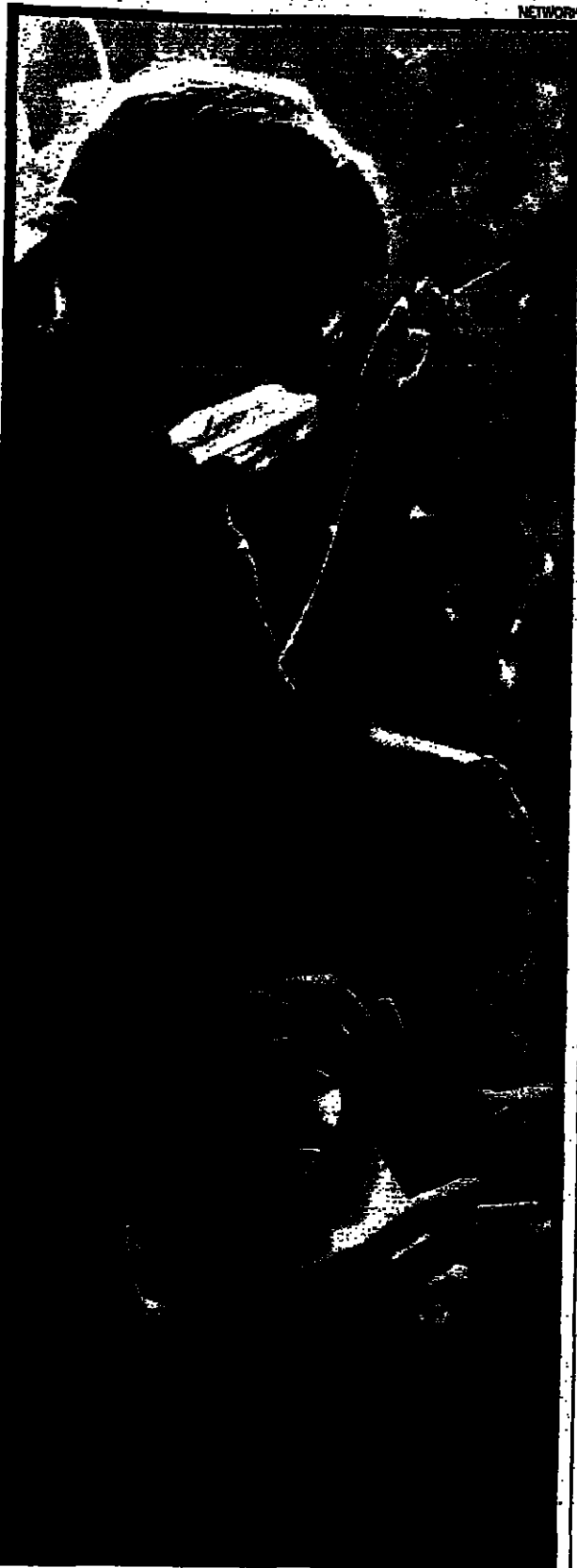
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Smog alert: staffrooms are often thick with tobacco fumes

I cannot say that I have a particularly well-developed sense of smell, but whenever I venture into a school I have not visited before, it is smell that leads me to the staffroom. For, with very few exceptions, staffrooms are surrounded by dense fumes.

It may come as a surprise to many people, but schools are among the few public workplaces that still allow smoking. Most local councils have a no-smoking policy for all premises other than schools.

So why have schools escaped the smoking ban that almost every other institution has introduced? The answer may be related to the amount of stress under which teachers find themselves. Teaching is near the top of the list of professions whose members have the shortest life expectancy after retirement.

I know that being a teacher is very stressful. But smoking is a potential killer — not only for the smoker but for those who inhale the smoke. Puffing in the staffroom also tends to encourage non-smokers to take up the habit, sometimes almost in self-defence. Many teachers who enter the profession as "part-time" smokers soon become fully fledged members of the smoking fraternity.

Nevertheless, many teachers are unhappy about the amount of smoking that takes place in the staffroom because, of course, smoke affects everyone. If I had been given £1 by each

Why have school staffrooms escaped the ban on smoking in public workplaces, asks Richard Evans

teacher who told me that he or she objected to staffrooms being taken over by smokers, I would be a rich teacher (and there are not many of those around).

When I mentioned to colleagues that I was planning to write an article against smoking, they welcomed the idea. Non-smokers were pleased because they have long objected to, but could do nothing about, the smoke-filled staffroom. Several smokers pointed out that they were trying to give up but that, as teachers, it was almost impossible not to smoke with others lighting up around them. They felt that this pressure might just make a difference.

It must also be remembered that teachers are not the only people involved. Children are normally banned from the staffroom but they are aware of the smell of smoke es-

caping into the corridors. In this way, they are introduced to a duplicitous philosophy of "do as I say, not as I do". It is illegal to place cigarette advertisements near schools because of the influence that they can exert on young minds — surely a teacher who smokes is an even greater influence. Teachers are role models and can either encourage their students to smoke or, indeed, prevent them from taking up this deadly habit.

The decision on whether or not smoking can take place on school premises must be taken out of the control of the school or local education authority. It should be banned by the Government.

This is the way forward for healthier future generations of students and teachers. It may also have the more mundane advantage of preventing legal action from staff or students suffering from smoking-related diseases, as has happened in the United States.

I met the entertainer Roy Castle shortly before he died of cancer. It is well known that he had never touched a cigarette but had regularly performed in the smoky atmosphere of clubs. At the time nobody complained, either because they were not aware of the dangers or because it would have seemed rather pathetic. However, today the mood has changed and we now know the risks that smoking entails.



Don't do as I say, do as I do: children may copy their teachers

Learning need not be confined to the city

A community university benefits rural students, says Iola Smith

Many adults who missed the opportunity to try higher education in their teens prefer to ease themselves into degree-level study with a part-time course. There is no shortage of opportunities for people in large conurbations, where most of the new universities are located. But in rural areas suitable courses inevitably are thinner on the ground.

A new scheme in North Wales, which could be a model for other parts of Britain, gives mature students from rural areas that opportunity. Bangor University has established the Community University of North Wales, offering introductory courses at further education (FE) colleges throughout the region.

Professor Roy Evans, Bangor's Vice-Chancellor, says: "There are many people in the region who, for various reasons — geographic, linguistic, domestic or financial — have never had the opportunity to improve their skills and qualifications. The community university will enable them to do so in their own locality."

Other universities offer franchised courses, but this initiative is different because it involves an agreement between all the region's FE colleges and its two higher education institutions, Bangor University and the North East Wales Institute (New).

Potential undergraduates will build up credits at their local college, which will count towards a degree. They will then be able to transfer to Bangor or the institute. There is no guaranteed university place, but if they are committed and hardworking they can build up the requisite number of credits.

Already 70 courses taught in eight FE colleges have been designated as community university part-

way courses. They include, for example, a Higher National Diploma course at Llysoesi Agricultural College in Ruthin. Students can transfer to an agriculture degree course at Bangor. Similarly, part-time students studying for the college's forestry certificate can benefit by switching on completion to Bangor's forest science degree course.

Physical transfer between institutions is not essential, however. The community university is seeking ways of teaching entire degree courses in colleges. New has begun by offering its BA design course as a part-time option at Menai FE College in Bangor.

"By taking the FE route we are able to use credits and modules to break down barriers," says David Roberts, chairman of the community university initiative and Bangor's academic registrar. "Students can progress from NVQ level through BTEC to a degree."

But that is only the first stage. We envisage that by applying the Internet and distance learning, students will be able to study at home or in the workplace. We are investing £100,000 this year on exploring these options. And we have earmarked four curriculum areas — business management, media studies, community studies and engineering — as pilots for developing and testing new teaching methods."

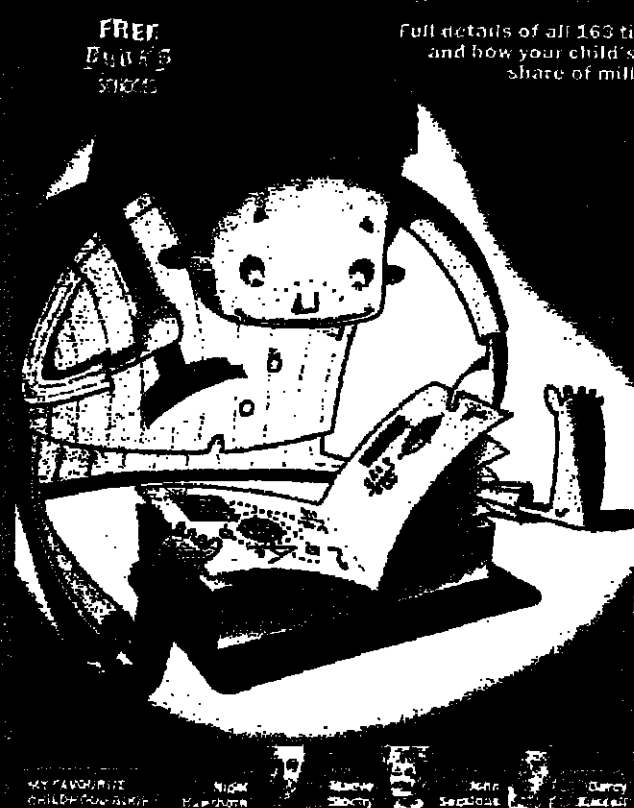
The initiative has been so successful that the community university is developing part-time degree courses. Fifty students have enrolled for a BA in social studies being taught in Gwynedd and Flintshire. A second part-time course on culture and the arts will be launched this month.

These courses are taught in the evening and at weekends. Students can take between four and ten years to complete their degrees.

30p

THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES



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THE TIMES ARTS

POP COMMENT



All glory to the angels in the wings

A week into the new year, ten days into a flu lurge sans pareil, and still I find myself uncharacteristically buoyant. Why so? Have my balls come up in the lottery? Is *The Times* tea-lady covertly slipping me tubes of Viagra from her estimable trolley? Are my children finally emerging from their zoological phase?

No, the cause is literally more prosaic. I have just raced through a splendid book, a tome which restores my faith in the inspirational power of the arts after what seems like several decades of reporting little but greed, stupidity and vanity in all corners of Luvviedom.

It is published this month by the Theatres Trust, written by Judith Strong, and called *Encore: Strategies for Theatre Renewal*. Yes, I know that must rank with *Ten Great Carpet Showrooms in the Hendon Area* in the all-time list of unappetising book titles. Don't be put off. This is a riveting read.

Quite simply it recounts the history of 14 fine Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco theatres that were once mired in disrepair, disuse or disrepute but have now been lov-

ingly restored to theatrical use. "What's so special about that?" you ask. "Isn't the lottery paying to re-develop hundreds of culture palaces, at billions of pounds' cost to the poor saps clogging up the nation's newsagents every Saturday?"

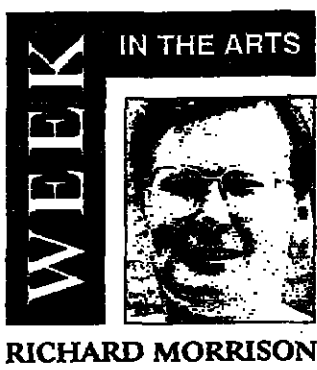
Indeed it is. But the restorations chronicled in *Encore* owe nothing to lottery money and everything to the enthusiasm, energy and generosity of local enthusiasts. As Sir John Drummond, the Theatres Trust chairman, says in his foreword: "It is significant that nearly all of the stories told here predate the lottery, and that where the influence of the lottery has been felt, it has not always been beneficial."

More of that later. First, let's talk miracles. Some of these theatres were saved by the unwavering vision of determined individuals battling against daunting financial obstacles, indifferent bureaucrats and ghoulish property developers. One reads with astonishment of the two

amateur-operatic stalwarts so intent on saving the Sheffield Lyceum that they remortgaged their own homes to pay the £100,000 selling price. Or of the Manchester philanthropist who bought an entire two-acre office block for £225 million in order that his beloved Palace Theatre could extend its backstage area by a crucial 20ft.

Other theatres were saved by communal efforts. In 1972 10,000 people protested to stop the Blackpool Grand being turned into a Littlewoods store. As *Encore* notes: "It is ironic that, 25 years on, the theatre is thriving while the store which was to replace it is closing its outlets throughout the country."

Another historic Lancashire theatre, the 216-year-old Lancaster Grand, was saved from demolition by an amateur dramatic group, Lancaster Footlights. Its members clubbed together to buy it, restored it, fought a court case to preserve it when the council (intent on lucra-



RICHARD MORRISON

quary deemed that cinema attendance was "nationally in steep decline". Thank heavens for the myopia of officialdom. And the Sheffield Lyceum received its £12 million facelift largely because the city council became besotted with hosting the 1991 World Student Games and wanted a swanky arts venue to show off to the world's *jeunesse sportive*. Alas, the Games nearly bankrupted the city; but hooray, the lusciously redecorated Lyceum has proved its value ever since.

Not every story in *Encore* is rosy. Newcastle has a glorious Grade I listed theatre — the Tyne, with its unique Victorian stage machinery that could (and did) sink the Spanish Armada on stage for the amazement of 19th-century Geordies. Local enthusiasts managed to save it from a fate worse than death as a blue-movie flop. But its future role in a city that has vast, lottery-fuelled cultural ambitions is uncertain, to say the least.

Which brings us to the L-word. At first the lottery was welcomed by organisations such as the Theatres Trust, which expected it to bring an overdue sack of lolly to those trying to restore Britain's magnificent but flaky theatrical heritage. Disillusionment followed all too swiftly. In its annual report last month the trust declared that the lottery has led to "white elephants that should never have been started, vastly over-elaborate refurbishments, schemes that cannot be completed unless more money is produced, and buildings that cost more to run than anticipated".

That's not all. The knock-on effect of the lottery projects will probably hit non-lottery ventures — such as those theatres restored by local efforts. As Judith Strong notes in *Encore*, the new lottery-funded Lowry Centre in Salford might seem like a wonderful boost to the North West, but

it will be in direct competition with Manchester's Palace Theatre and Opera House. Is there enough audience and quality touring shows to keep all three in business? Nobody really knows. Nobody did the hard-nosed calculations before handing out the millions.

The message of *Encore* is that theatres can flourish in the most unpromising circumstances, provided that the community wants a theatre badly enough. The worry about many grandiose lottery projects is that the money has often been awarded without any demonstration of grass-roots support, let alone panting enthusiasm. There may be some horrible crashes ahead in 1999 and 2000.

But I shan't spoil my good mood by thinking about them now. Today it is sufficient to celebrate the doughty thespian battlers chronicled in *Encore*. In 1885 Jerome K. Jerome wrote that "the glorious uncertainty of the boards almost rivals that of the turf". Not much has changed in 114 years. But that only makes a triumph against outrageously long odds all the sweeter — whether on turf or boards.

Nothing dumb about this show

Gregory Doran's revival of *The Winter's Tale* begins, as Shakespeare's play doesn't, with some arresting dumb show. In comes Antony Sher's Leontes in diamond crown and ermine accessories, stalking down a towering neo-classical corridor peopled by courtiers in monacles and spats, frock coats, Ruritanian uniforms and black Edwardian dresses. You hear the whispering that is presumably rattling around his paranoid brainbox: you observe his big, grim smile; you begin to suspect that this will be one of the RSC's stronger-than-usual stabs at late, late Shakespeare.

So it is, too, and not just because of the power of Sher's manic jealousy or his skill at showing a man slipping ever deeper into despotism. His Leontes sounds almost incredulous when he first admits his suspicions to himself, and when he tells Geoffrey Freshwater's bluff Camillo that his wife Hermione is having an affair with his friend Polixenes, it is with a tiny, embarrassed laugh. But disgust and blinkered rage have soon overwhelmed the residual tenderness he signals, and the Sher who eventually limps onto a dais to judge the queen is a roaring, snarling monster with so little command over himself that he cannot enunciate

his accusations properly. It is a forceful, intelligent piece of acting, and when Sher is penitently bunched on the ground at the end, a touching one, but it is not the only memorable performance on offer. Estelle Kohler is a fine, ringing Paulina and Ken Bones's Polixenes formidably fierce. And Alexandra Gilbreath displays a versatility and depth I had not suspected. Maybe it was the after-effects of *Iu* that activated the lump in my throat, but I was more moved by her Hermione than by any I have seen.

That is partly because at first she is, if not exactly stilted, at least pretty cool and laid-back. When her Hermione offhandedly nudges Polixenes as they sit on a settee, or relaxedly dances with him, you can see the hint of a reason for Leontes's imaginings. But when she appears for her trial she is so altered that the court gasps. It isn't just that she has clearly spent weeks on bread and water in some cramped dungeon. This frail, sweaty figure speaks with simple humility and utterly unaf-

fected dignity. She has been bitterly wronged — and she is more queen than she ever was. Doran's production has several original touches. Leontes's son Mamillius is a sickly boy in a wheelchair, which is an over-obvious way of preparing us for his death but does bring centre-stage the most helpless victim of his father's lunacy. The sheepshearing, as befits a celebration financed by a nouveau-riche shepherd, occurs in a sort of fleece-baling factory, complete with pulleys and iron wheels. The billowing cloth that begins as the court's ceiling becomes mountainous terrain, the mouth of the bear that eats poor Antigonus, even an enormous bed for Autolycus to wallow in. As the pickpocket Autolycus himself, Ian Hughes entertainingly changes from C of E vicar to Jewish peddler to Lytton Strachey lookalike.

True, the episcopal figure who arrives in Greek Orthodox hat and scarlet robes with Apollo's answer to Leontes's appeal to Delphi is a bit absurd. But Doran could argue that *The Winter's Tale* occurs in a pagan world yet preaches the Christian virtues of forgiveness and reconciliation. In this absorbing production even the muddles seem justifiable.



Alexandra Gilbreath is a moving Hermione and Antony Sher a powerful Leontes in Gregory Doran's absorbing RSC staging of *The Winter's Tale*

Weird but wonderful

In a programme note to this production Andrew Visnevski suggests that Brecht is nowadays valued more for his theoretical writings than for his plays. It is an intriguing argument but one that belongs with the old chestnut about whether so-and-so has stopped beating his wife.

A better course than weighing arguments this way and that is to see a Brecht play. This is not a suggestion that often comes from me, but Visnevski's achievement with this early work, dating from 1924 and rarely seen, provides a thrilling discovery of his author's weird skills. Contrary elements are rammed into each other and there's never a moment when we aren't aware we are watching actors telling us something, even though (human nature being what it is) we do keep slipping into the simpler half-belief that they have identified with their roles.

Hitler launched his Munich putsch while Brecht was rehearsing the play, and the sense of a society in deep trouble pervades the scenes where a cluster of outraged landowners with such names as Lancaster and Warwick look around for a strong man to restore order in the state. Since events follow the same route as in Marlowe's play, their complaint is that the king dotes on Gaveston, but Brecht is not in-

terested in exact parallels. He merely tosses in suggestions. We are to watch how liberators develop into tyrants and be on our guard.

Visnevski's Cherub Company (founded 21 years ago) has set itself the tricky task of re-imagining a Brecht-like production, helped (or maybe hindered?) by the many surviving descriptions of its Munich premiere. The cast of nine are in whiteface soiled with black wrinkles, wear costumes that are part Twenties, part medieval, and the central feature of

Jason Southgate's design is a four-poster bed hung with white curtains that serves in turn as a place for sexy coupling, homo and hetero, chambers in various palaces and abbey, and finally the cesspit where Mariano Caligaris's naked Edward meets his end.

Caligaris's accent is sometimes awkward though Brecht might have blessed this feature, since he included a Latvian non-actress with no German in his cast. But in the final scenes of humiliation Caligaris displays a powerful serenity that engineers the King's shift from fool to quasi-hero.

A shrewd casting decision gives the roles of Gaveston and Lighthorn, lover and killer, to the same actor, Christopher Gunning: the dead comrade's boy with hungry features becoming a thinly smiling sadist in a butcher's white coat. Rebecca Over gives a fine account of the Queen's descent into sluttiness, but the most striking acting comes from William Wollen's Mortimer, turning from the scholarly mien and disdainful diction of a Victorian bishop into a bald and lumbering Moses Maggot, fascinating to behold. The same can be said of the production as a whole, though Brecht would have made the soldiers peel spuds with more conviction.



Mariano Caligaris and Christopher Gunning

JEREMY KINGSTON

LONDON CONCERTS: Young music stars shine at the keyboard and in a Baroque ensemble

Modern youth

PLS Young Artists Purcell Room

The Park Lane Group series is unique in that its programmes emerge from the chosen group of talented young players. Nothing is imposed, except that all the repertoire must be contemporary. So what do musicians in their twenties play these days? In a week of concerts there are 63 works by an astonishing 50 composers, including Ligeti, Sciarrino, Farnsworth, Britten, Minna Keal, Bryars, Berio and Tippett.

A highlight of Wednesday's programmes was a pair of Messiaen piano performances. The great French composer reinvented the piano for his own celestial uses. But his works, however dazzling and enigmatic, hold a mirror up to the player's nature. New Zealander Stephen De Pledge, who began with *Petites esquisses d'oiseaux*, is a disarmingly relaxed and sunny performer; the difficult double articulations shivered under his hands and his switches of weight were like quicksilver. Messiaen may have caught the aggressive strangeness of the birds, but the overriding impression left by De Pledge was of playful mystery. Israeli pianist Alon Goldstein brought

more solemnity to *Le Loriot* from *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*, and at first seemed self-conscious but proved sonorously romantic. Goldstein's pedalling softened the shrill incandescence that De Pledge wrung from the piano's upper registers. But his palette and rhythmic energy were impressive, especially in Graham Hair's *Wild Cherries & Honeycomb*, a brain-teaser of separate spinning lines.

De Pledge's programme emphasised the light and lucid, from Fiddin's hilarious *Furniture*, which swings along jazzily, to Mustonen's innocently frenetic *Ballade*. He gave due tribute to Jonathan Harvey's tribute *Tombeau de Messiaen*, although it was hard not to find the taped sounds superfluous. An effective addition to the piano came in Adès's enchanting *Still Sorrowing*, where adhesive transforms the piano's middle register into a blunt, staccato intruder.

Perhaps it is a sign of the times that there is not only a solo saxophonist in this year's series, but a quartet too. Ruth Darby, accompanied by Maria King, playing tenor and soprano saxes, gave an uneven programme. After Geert van Keulen's long and ungrateful *Fingers*, written apparently against both instruments, Turnage's charming *Sarabande*, with its after-midnight clock "chimes", offered respite in a nicely slithering tune. Her performance of Ian Wilson's solo *Sleep at Walking* was eloquent and she injected a muscular vibe into Gary Carpenter's Sonata, although loud sax and piano in unison was not always a complementary combination.

HELEN WALLACE

Bach with bite

Despite its Germanic-sounding name, the Baroque ensemble Kontrabande is British and for the first 18 months of its existence has based itself primarily in London. Its director is the counter-tenor Charles Humphries, one of the brightest of our rising young stars. It is a measure of Humphries's exceptional talent that although only a few years out of college, studying with Charles Brett, James Bowman and Michael Chance, he has been able to surround himself with a fine group of relatively established performers.

Their concert at the Wigmore Hall on Wednesday night gave an equally starring role to the ensemble's oboist, Alexandra Bellamy, in a concerto by Bach. In addition to a pair of cantatas by the same composer featuring oboe as well as voice. The cantata *Ich habe genügt*, BWV 82, may celebrate the purification of the Virgin Mary, but its longing for the quiescence of death is unmistakable. That sense of mortality, expressed in the languorous oboe obbligato that threads its way in and out of the vocal line, was superbly captured by the group.

Humphries is gifted with not only a naturally beautiful voice, even throughout the compass, but also the ability and resources to put it to expressive use. His command of Bachian "affects" or emotions is impressive, as evidenced by the subtly contrasting passions of the three arias of *Ich habe genügt*; the muted recitativo of the second of them, *Schlummer ein*, was simply spellbinding.

Cantata BWV 170, *Vergnügte Ruh*, elicited equally stylish and compelling singing from him, and some mighty fingerwork from Laurence Cummings on chamber organ. A different aspect of Humphries's musicianship was on display in Vivaldi's cantata *Cessate omni assidue*, where the progression of the abandoned lover from self-pity to vengeful fury was colourfully traced. The hushed opening to the recitative describing the horrid, silent caves, whether the protagonist retires to wreak his vengeance, was a theatrical coup.

With one instrument to a part, the sound produced by the strings is on the thin side, but that is more than compensated for by the alert articulation and shaping of phrases. Both in the cantatas and in the Concerto for oboe d'amore, BWV 1055, the ensemble, led by Clare Salaman, provided a lively, nuanced texture, which in the concerto was an ideal backdrop for Bellamy's solo work.

There was incisive and ebullient playing too from Richard Campbell and Marie Cunningham in Telemann's Concerto for viola da gamba and recorder.

BARRY MILLINGTON

After el
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TOP TEN ALBUMS

Quite a chip o

173

Handwritten signatures and notes at the bottom of the page.

After eleven attempts, we have lift-off

ANI DIFRANCO

Up Up Up Up Up
(Righteous Babe/Cooking Vinyl) COOK 173 £12.99

LESS than a year after the groundbreaking *Little Plastic Castle*, Ani DiFranco is back with a new album, her twelfth no less. But although the 28-year-old singer, songwriter and guitarist from Buffalo, New York, is prolific, she does not put out this stuff for the sake of it; quite the reverse.

The curiously titled *Up Up Up Up Up* finds her stretching out yet again in new and unexpected directions. Musically, she has allowed her songs to develop within the framework of a band identity as never before, and numbers such as *Know Now Then*, with its oddly skewed rhythm-section vamp, and *Come Away From It*, with its claustrophobic jazz-influenced arrangement, underscore how far beyond her folk origins she is now prepared to explore. Her razor-sharp funk guitar riffs in tandem with Julie Wolf's organ part at the start of *Jukebox* is breathtaking.

There is evidence too of a new maturity in DiFranco's writing. *Angry Anywhere* offers a fascinating insight into her own emotional development couched in a message of reassurance to her father: "Now I've seen both of my parents play out the hands that they were dealt/As each year goes by I know more about how my father must have felt".

Coming on at times like an American P.J. Harvey, DiFranco combines an abrasive, witchy sense of otherness with an all-important element of humanity. Meanwhile, her musicianship grows apace. It seems the only way for her to go is indeed up.

ANNIE DONOGAN

Muleskinner Blues
(Capricorn) CAPRICORN 58 £12.99

ANYONE who has ever been to the British Isles will be

NEW POP ALBUMS

1950s and early 1960s. Lonnie Donegan is now little more than a name echoing down the years from the pre-history of rock'n'roll. His twangy voice conjures recollections of the days when pop music was beamed in on an indistinct signal from Radio Luxembourg and picked up, as if by clandestine arrangement, on valve-driven wirelesses and crystal radio sets in bedrooms around the country.

The primary access to mainstream (BBC) radio for artists of Donegan's ilk was on children's shows such as *Saturday Club*, which may explain why cheesy, neo-vaudeville anthems such as *Does Your Cheeking Gum Lose its Flavour* and *My Old Man's a Dustman* remain among his best-remembered hits.

But as the biggest star of the skiffle craze and an early importer of American blues, gospel and folk styles, notably with his first hit, *Rock Island Line*, the Glasgow-born singer and strummer was nevertheless a key influence on the generation of musicians who invented British rock'n'roll. An early disciple was Van Morrison, who makes two guest appearances on *Muleskinner Blues*. Donegan's first studio album in more than 20 years, along with the veteran jazzman Chris Barber, country-rock guitarist Albert Lee and others.

Now 67, Donegan still commands respect, and lean new recordings of cobwebbed favourites including *Rock Island Line*, *Swing Low* and *Am I a Woman* (reworked as a duet with Morrison) recall the magic of his prime. But despite the gritty edge to his performance of Paul Kennerley's ballad, organ and harmonica swirling around the mix like water, the album suffers from a surfeit of

codgerish lamentations to the good old days such as *Skiffle* ("When I was a little boy my mother said to me...") and the quaint campfire ballad of *Fancy Talking Tinker and Poker Club*.

At its best, as on the title track, *Muleskinner Blues* offers a relaxed round of heritage rock'n'roll in much the same vein as that purveyed by the Notting Hillbillies. But skiffle was only ever a bridge to somewhere else and, despite the album's nostalgic cachet, Donegan's music has a somewhat limited appeal once shorn of its original innocence and vigour.

DAVE ALVIN

Blackjack David
(Hightone HCD 8091 £14.99)

BOB DYLAN and Dave Alvin seem to have formed a mutual admiration society. The title track of *Blackjack David* is a traditional song which Dylan recorded on his 1992 album *Good as I Been to You*, while the 43-year-old roots-rock veteran from Los Angeles has been the guest performer at a dozen or so of Dylan's recent shows.

But Alvin remains very much his own man on his sixth solo outing since the break-up of his group the Blasters. With a deep, slightly cracked voice, as hard and worn as old walnut panelling, he invests the melancholy narratives of *California Snow*, *From a Kitchen Table* and *1968* with a poignant charm that never becomes sentimental or mawkish.

"In a Texas bar there's a man sitting alone... He's drinking beer and he's feeling old," he sings in *Abilene*, another song about ordinary folk nursing their sadnesses with as much dignity as circumstances allow. Acoustic guitars, pedal steel, mandolin, banjo, organ and harmonica swirl around the mix like water, dancing over rocks, all steered with inerring melodic grace by Alvin's lugubrious drawl. The message, more of ten than not, is that life is a trying and frequently mournful business. So how come this music makes you feel so damn good?

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498



Ani DiFranco's new album is called *Up Up Up Up Up*. How very appropriate

JAY-Z
Vol 2... Hard Knock Life
(Northwestside/BMG) 74321 62555 £11.99

ALREADY a massive hit in America, where it was No 1 for five weeks, *Vol 2... Hard Knock Life* follows the depressing pattern established by rapper Jay-Z's previous opus, *In My Lifetime Vol 1*.

A succession of guest artists, including Foxy Brown, DMX,

Too Short and Memphis Bleek, are wheeled in to bolster the musings of the Brooklyn-born rapper who celebrates his grimly materialistic world-view with the customary displays of ultra-aggressive machismo on tracks such as *Money*, *Cash*, *Hoes*, *Ride or Die* and *Nigga What, Nigga Who*.

Samples from sources including the Isley Brothers and the theme from *Shaft* under-

line the lack of original thought, let alone wit, that is the album's besetting weakness. Only on the title track, with its incongruous little girl chorus sampled from the Broadway cast recording of the musical *Annie*, does the surly star bring anything out of the ordinary to this otherwise pointlessly self-aggrandising project.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Masters of American mojo

John Clarke delves deep into a monumental testament to the roots of American popular music

To produce a history of American popular music is a daunting enough task. Compiling a nine-volume CD set to go with it is a challenge of proportions. It is to author and compiler Allen Lowe's credit that he comes through it without having to ditch in an ocean of ready-made platitudes. *American Pop from Minstrel to Mojo* (on record 1993-1996 (Cadence Jazz Books)) is a provoking and thoughtful study of what Lowe terms Afro-American traditions "within a larger white society, in relation to which it has existed as both prisoner and liberator". He chose 1893 as a starting point because it marks a decade in which important records first started to be made and, he admits, "because I found a nice recording from that year which has acceptable sound and is historically appropriate".

That recording, *Mania's Black Baby* by the Unique Quartette, opens the set of nine CDs, *American Pop: An Audio History* (West Hill Audio Archives WH-1017, distributed in Britain by Harmonia Mundi), which accompanies the book. Although the CDs only go up to 1946 — ten years before the end of the period covered by the book — that doesn't really matter, since it is the formative years of American popular culture which prove the most fascinating. The Unique Quartette, for instance, are just that, a rare example of one of the earliest known recordings of a black vocal group singing a cappella, with gentle harmonies and a lilting melody. The link between them and Boyz n the Hood may be tenuous, but it's there. Other gems on volume one include pioneering black entertainer Bert Williams's *Nobody* (1906), Al Johnson's *You Made Me Love You* (1913) and the first blues artist to record, Mamie Smith, with *Sweet Man o Mine* (1921).

As the discs — and the book — go on, Lowe attempts to cover every style and facet of popular music from the early Cajun music of Dennis McGhee, to the jazz classics of Louis Armstrong, the vaudeville ribaldry of Sophie Tucker and the pensive border music of Lydia Mendoza. He also writes about an enthusiasm and knowledge that sends you scurrying to hear the track. Of Blind Willie Johnson's eerie, slide-guitar masterpiece *Dark Was The Night*, for instance, he says "only a black singer made motherless as a child, then rendered sightless by random irrational adult violence, condemned to live and wander in the most desolate reaches of the rural South and probably subject to waking nightmares of searing psychological heat as well as terrifying night visions of hell and damnation could have sung this".

As the millennium approaches there can be few better guides to the varied, fascinating and vastly influential music of the United States than this.

From there to another boxed set, this time devoted to a single artist, is not as giant a leap as it may sound. *The Complete Country & Western Recordings 1950-1968* by Ray Charles (Rhino R2 75328) is a four-CD set which shows how the blind pianist and singer blended soul, country and blues.

As the *American Pop* set shows, blues and country were not that far away from each other in the 1920s and 1930s. Songs, themes and idioms were shared and the first big star of the *Grand Ole Opry* radio show was black harmonica player DeFord Bailey. But by the time Charles started to cover music in the late 1950s, the two styles had grown apart. It was Charles's inspired but it's there. Other gems on volume one include pioneering black entertainer Bert Williams's *Nobody* (1906), Al Johnson's *You Made Me Love You* (1913) and the first blues artist to record, Mamie Smith, with *Sweet Man o Mine* (1921).

Apart from establishing what came to be termed country soul, it also gave country music a much-needed shot in the arm. All those influential hits are here, including *I Can't Stop Loving You*, *Take These Chains from My Heart* and *Busted*. Classics, in whatever genre you place them.

Listen out for Nigeria's Femi Kuti, rising son of a famous father, and Ednaswap, America's hit-writing factory of a band

Quite a chip off the old Fela

En route from Paris to London by Eurostar, Femi Kuti is attracting a lot of attention thanks to his brightly coloured traditional Nigerian dress. Beside him sits his identically attired wife, Funke, who has been flicking through some French magazines, all of which have her husband on the cover. If both look a little exhausted, it is scarcely a surprise. The previous evening, Kuti had led his 13-strong troupe of musicians and dancers (Funke among them) through a breathtakingly energetic two-hour show at Montmartre's La Cigale. The pair then partied until the early hours of the morning.

For Kuti, it was a double celebration. In addition to selling out his first European show, he has signed a deal with the Polygram label Sound of Barclay which will result in the release of his famous father's extensive back catalogue. Consequently, this month the first of 50 albums by Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the undisputed inventor of Afrobeat, will be available in Britain. Sadly, Kuti Sr will reap none of the rewards: 18 months ago, he died of an AIDS-related illness.

For 36-year-old Femi Kuti, his father's death had extraordinary repercussions. "In Nigeria my fans believe that my father is reincarnated in me," he explains. "For years nobody wanted to know me. Now I am worshipped as he was. I am expected to play his songs, to act like him, dance like him and dress as he did."

More importantly, Nigerians are counting on Femi, the eldest of Fela's three legitimate sons, to follow in his father's political footsteps. Fela was idolised not only for his funk-flavoured songs, but also for his socialist stand against the oppressive military regime



Femi Kuti learnt a lot from his father, the legendary Fela Anikulapo Kuti — such as how not to bring up his own son

which ruled Nigeria. Regularly imprisoned and tortured for his outspoken criticism of the Government, Fela devoted his life to the plight of the poor. His memorial service in Lagos, at which Femi played a concert, attracted more than a million mourners.

The younger Kuti's relationship with both his father and his father's fans has been far from straightforward. A member of Fela's sprawling band (which often numbered up to 80 players) from the age of 18, Femi quit after six years to form his own outfit, now known as the Positive Force.

"My father was furious when I left," he recalls. "He didn't utter one word to me for five years. Then in 1991 we started talking again and I asked to play at his club. After that we became very close, although a lot of his followers continued to refuse to acknowledge my music." The pair's reunion coincided with the release of Femi's second album, his own raw take on Afrobeat's funky fusion of soul-

ful jazz, driving percussion and sharp social comment. "I knew that my father had called my first album rubbish," says Kuti. "I launched the follow-up at his club. He sat in the audience and I could tell he was waiting for me to disgrace him again. I saw the shock on his face when we started to play. I watched him get up and dance. Then he came on stage and insisted he take a solo."

In 1995 Femi released *Wonderland Park*, an album so accomplished that some critics insisted it had to have been written by his father. "It was a national scandal," says Kuti. "My father had to go to the papers to tell the people that they were not his songs."

Even if Fela were still alive, similar accusations could not be levelled at his son's latest album, *Shoki Shoki*. Although rooted in Afrobeat, short songs such as the infectious poppy first single *Beng Beng Beng* have been brought up to date by a host of contemporary dance influences. "I grew

up listening to acts like Michael Jackson and the Temptations," says Kuti. "I know the power of a four-minute song. My father's tracks could last up to an hour. I found that so frustrating. I may be destined to play Afrobeat, but that doesn't mean I can't make it my own. I love rock, rap, house and jungle. I want to introduce those sounds to my music. I want to take Afrobeat into the future."

Kuti has similar hopes for his three-year-old son, who is soon to start piano lessons. "My father bought me a trumpet at eight and a piano at 12, but I was never allowed a teacher. He always said that those with a gift don't need to be taught. I disagree."

In fact, Kuti has rejected several of his father's beliefs. While Fela extolled the virtues of marijuana, Femi (a reformed dope smoker) is against drugs and alcohol. While his father was famed for his promiscuity with the once "married" 27 women in a day, Femi is devoted to Funke.

It is Kuti's attitude towards his son, however, which marks him out as his own man. Despite now leading a group called Movement Against Second Slavery, Kuti refuses to use his young son as a political tool, as he himself was. "I was taken out of school at 12 to protest with my father about soldiers being able to discipline students," he says. "I was arrested, locked up and beaten many times. I don't want to force my son to be like me. If he is not his own person, his life has no meaning."

LISA VERRICO

• *Beng Beng Beng* is out now on Barclay/Polygram. *Shoki Shoki* is released on Feb 8

Music UK is the market leader in canned music, the provider of that infuriating soundtrack that pursues you around supermarket aisles and hotel lobbies. The company has just compiled its chart of last year's most-played songs and sitting at the top is Natalie Imbruglia's *Torn*.

You might think this would delight Anne Preven of Ednaswap. She wrote the song and stands to make enough royalties to retire to a tropical island. Yet she is appalled by her own success. "At the beginning it was weird and interesting. Now you can't get into an elevator without hearing it. It would be terrible if we were only known for *Torn*," she says.

Although you may not have heard of Preven's band Ednaswap, you soon will, for they happen to be some of the finest songwriters on the planet. *Sanctuary* from Madonna's *Bedtime Stories* album is another Ednaswap original, written by Preven and the band's guitarist, Scott Cutler.

Their supremely confident new album, *Wonderland Park*, proves there are plenty more where that came from and taps a rich vein of classic songwriting. Shrewd producers in search of an off-the-peg hit are no doubt plundering its radio-friendly melodies as we speak. Yet if there is any justice, the album should also finally establish Ednaswap as stars in their own right.

But first, to clear up the Torn saga. Back in 1993 and before forming their band, Preven and Cutler visited London. "We had met in New York and immediately clicked as songwriters," says Preven, who writes all the lyrics. "But we knew absolutely nothing about the music industry and the producer Phil Thornalley helped us to arrange some of our songs." They made a tape which included *Torn* and Thornalley began hawking it

Torn apart, doing fine



Madonna and Natalie Imbruglia are among the stars to be thankful for the songwriting talents of Ednaswap

around. He eventually struck gold when he gave the song to Imbruglia and it became one of the biggest singles of 1998.

For a long time Ednaswap were bitter, complaining that Imbruglia had never acknowledged their part in her success. "An interviewer said something nice about her lyrics and she just said, 'Thank you'. She didn't even mention us," Preven complained. Last month the royalties belatedly started trickling through and at the MTV Europe awards the Australian star managed a brusque thank you to Ednaswap as she waved her award for the song she didn't write.

"In the beginning she wasn't keen on drawing attention to the fact that she didn't write it," says a now mellower Preven. "She's done better since. It's all come out and it doesn't really matter."

made Ednaswap wary of others recording their songs, working for Madonna was far happier. "She was very open and respectful," Preven says. "She asked what we thought of her version. She was comfortable about letting others into the picture. At first I hated her version, but once I heard the album I understood what she was doing."

The five-strong Ednaswap formed in Los Angeles in 1994 when Preven and Cutler returned from London. They swiftly landed a record deal with EastWest on the strength of just four songs. "We were rehearsing in Scott's living room and they came to hear us play an acoustic set," Preven recalls. "We only had four songs and we had to think of excuses to stop after we had played them all rather than admit we had no more." The label thought it was

signing an acoustic-based folk-pop band but, perversely, Ednaswap then went and made a big melodramatic glam-rock album. "They were furious, especially with *Torn*. Our demo was more like Natalie's version and then we made it really heavy and obnoxious," Preven says.

They were dropped, but their large live following meant they were immediately signed by another label. Their second album, *Wacko Magno*, was intense and laden with layers of dense sound. "There were all our influences in there, from Led Zeppelin and AC/DC through to David Bowie," Preven says.

Wonderland Park was conceived as a solo project after the band almost split at the end of 1997. "It was the end of a long tour. We were burnt out and there were a lot of problems," Preven says. "We started writing in Scott's house and it sounded very different. I've always been a fan of singer-songwriters such as Joni Mitchell and I guess that started coming out. Eventually we realised there was no reason why it shouldn't be an Ednaswap record."

It is, in fact, the melodic folk-pop album their first label wanted. "It's a more manicured sound," admits Preven. "We wanted to allow more space so that the record highlights the songs rather than the arrangements. We got sick of riff rock. We felt we needed to make an album that was gentle and beautiful, with the lyrics and melodies out front."

What is left is an album of songs which will sparkle even when piped into an elevator. And this time, hopefully, it will be Ednaswap you hear singing them.

NIGEL

WILLIAMSON

• *Wonderland Park* is released by Island Records

LISTINGS

Liz Lochhead in London.

ARTS

JAZZ

Mike Westbrook's peak

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargreaves

LONDON

WOYZECK. The London International Music Festival opens with a mini-drama based on the Schiller play, accompanied by haunting chamber music and performed by the Josef Nadi Company from France. Purcell Room (0171-950 4242). Opens tomorrow, 8pm.

PERFECT DAYS. Stephen Redmond's award-winning performance as the thingy-smithy, celebrity-haunting, long-haired, John Tilly director Liz Lochhead's play. Hampstead (0171-722 5301). Opens tonight, 7pm.

THE EXMOOR SINGERS. The award-winning mixed choir under James Jarvis opens its concert with Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*, followed by Schoenberg's *Western and Eastern*. St John's (0171-222 1051). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.

LONDON SCHOOLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Donat's *Concerto* and Joseph Suk's tragic masterpiece, the *Asrael* Symphony, comprise tonight's programme by the young musicians of the LSSO. Christopher Adey conducts. Barbican (0171-222 5301). Tonight, 7.30pm.

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM. The renowned soprano Anne Evans leads a distinguished cast in a concert performance by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*, followed by Schoenberg's *Western and Eastern*. The Royal Concert Hall (0121-212 3333). Tomorrow, 7pm.

GLASGOW. The gift of 19th-century Vienna is recreated in two concerts by the Glasgow Symphony Orchestra, directed by Christopher Warren-Green. With the Johann Strauss Danzons. The Royal Concert Hall (0141-287 5511). Tomorrow and Sun, 7.30.

MANCHESTER. Vasily Sinaisky conducts the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra in the last concert in its series celebrating Russian music. Here Prokofiev's *Second Violin Concerto* is joined by Shostakovich's *Third Symphony* and Rachmaninov's *Third Symphony*. Bridgewater Hall (0161-607 8000). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.



Walter Weller conducts *Fidelio* in Birmingham

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
 ■ House full, returns only ■ Some seats available ■ Seats at all prices

KRAFFT'S LAST TAPE. Edward Petherbridge's touring performance as Beckett's ancient sexologist, replying last time. Also the rarely performed *Brothel* (30 seconds long). Arts (0171-530 3241).

QUATRE MAINS. Aesthetically perfect dance for hands created by Andrew Dawson and Jozef Houben. Lyric Studio (0161-741 2311).

CHICAGO. Maria Friedman injects new blood into the hit revival of *Kander and Ebb's* musical about murder and Sicilian fate. Adelphi (0171-344 0055).

JESUS MY BOY. Tom Conti in John Dowie's hilariously amusing comedy about Joseph's side of the story. Apollo, W1 (0171-494 5070).

PETER PARK. Justin Salinger in the title role, with David Troughton as

Captain Hook, in return of Fiona Leach's enjoyable production. Olivier (0171-492 3030).

THE SHOWMAN. The much-loved Raymond Briggs characters soar over the audience in Bill Alexander's joyful production. Piccadilly, W1 (0171-863 8222).

THE KING AND I. A happy tune with Phil Wilton's *Swan Factory* production of the hit musical. BAC (0171-222 2229).

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. Gregory Doran's production from Stratford-upon-Avon, featuring Philip Voss's superb Shylock. Barbican (0171-638 8891).

ARABIAN NIGHTS. An Arab, a British and a Jewish tale, with a cast of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Young Vic (0171-628 8363).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

LITTLE VOICE (15). Mark Herman's wonderful version of Jim Carver's stage hit. Jane Horrocks sings glorious songs of love and loss. Michael Caine, Ewan McGregor, Brenda Blethyn and Jim Broadbent star around in the foreground.

THE SIEGE (15). Denzel Washington, Annette Bening and Bruce Willis rip over each other's bodies as they try to defend an Arab terrorist offensive in Manhattan. Chillingly real, beautifully acted. Director Edward Zwick. Ropes a real new nerve.

PSYCHO (15). Hopeless remake of Hitchcock's original. Gus Van Sant re-shoots this classic fear movie in colour, mixes the tropes and replaces the shuffling suspense. With Vince Vaughn and Anne Hathaway doing their worst to replace Al Pacino and Shelley Long.

5 PM (15). Low-budget sci-fi adventure by David Aronowicz that charts the madness of a genius mathematician who is haunted by nightmares and money-mad investors. Sean Gullette is the mesmerizing lead.

ANGEL DUST (15). Cool, classy Japanese melodrama about a psychic detective who has to risk her future to solve a case. Directed by the Tokyo tube. Sogo Ishii directs a compelling, sophisticated psychodrama that ultimately has too many beats.

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (PG). A resolutely scratchy reprint of Howard Hawks's 1944 classic in which Bacall smokes fish in a barrel and Bogart falls madly in love.

CURRENT

THE ACID HOUSE (18). Three darkly comic tales of drugs, drink and hallucination by Irvine Welsh. An indie classic, with Stephen McKelvie, Ewan McGregor, and Kevin McKidd. Director, Paul McGuigan.

SITCOM (18). A French bourgeois family unravels itself. Mildly diverting, but really a very good ensemble cast. Director, Francois Ozon.

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION (PG). Patrick Stewart's Enterprise crew come to the rescue of a peaceable race who have found the secret of youth. Lightly comic. With Donnie Murphy, F Murray Abraham. Director, Jonathan Frakes.



In the first flush of success: the All Saints — Nicole Appleton, Melanie Blatt, Shaznay Lewis and Natalie Appleton — at last year's Brit Awards

Belly-buttons fluff it

A year ago All Saints were the elegant antidote to national Spice overload. So what went wrong?

YOU may recall that at this time last year, All Saints were all that and a bag of chips.

The vital bits of the dog. The bee's knees. Their timing was perfect — a mere week before the sublime *Never Ever* went to No 1, we were experiencing a Spice overload.

The Movie had carpet-bombed Britain, by being the only thing to do on National Boredom Day, ie. Boxing Day, and left the nation feeling slightly queasy — if only for the product-placement scene, where the Spices sucked on Chupa-Chups while drinking Pepsi and eating Walker's crisps.

Compared to this pig-in-muck marketing, All Saints seemed like divine, elegant minimalism — a cleansing bowl of mous soup after a year of veal and cherry pie. It was impeccable timing: with their baggy combat and old men's vests, a stripped-down, sexy hymn and a dance that was a mere warm-up exercise ("Okay, now shake your shoulders girls and — relax!"), it all seemed so 1998, so tasteful.

Melanie Blatt was proudly flying the flag for gorgeous chicks with big noses; Shaznay Lewis was a successful black female, British singer/songwriter — still a suspiciously under-represented force in the charts; and the two Appleton

sisters seemed fairly inoffensive, in an *FRIM* kind of way.

But a year later, it's all gone horribly pear-shaped. For starters, it must be the quickest implosion on record: after a mere 12 months, Natalie has stomped off; Melanie is breastfeeding until next Christmas; and the other two seem so sour and bored it's like watching polar bears banging their heads against the bars in a zoo.

Their last couple of television appearances have given the impression that they are world-famous for chewing gum and rolling their eyes. "It must have been an amazing year for you," "Yeh, Really, tho' I'm just lookin' forward to gettin' home forra bit." While "talks" have been going on over Christmas and the new year, trying to heal the rift and get the cash-cows on their feet again, it might be time to look at the reasons why the rift occurred in the first place.

Obviously, a lot of it is down to what happens in the first flush of fame: people go mad. Within a month of *Never Ever* going to No 1, everyone under the age of 30 was shivering in tiny vests and wearing their hair ironed, with one slide. Marks & Spencer now does



CAITLIN MORAN

combats for £29.99; and when M&S starts manufacturing the 1990s equivalent of Beale wigs, you've obtained the level of fame that will chop on your brains and destroy your reason within a week.

Another part of All Saints' current malaise can be put down to their dating arrangements. There is something disturbing about a group who all have famous boyfriends. In the past year Natalie has had an on/off thing with Robbie Williams; Nicole has been out and broken up with Jamie Theakston; Melanie became pregnant by the bass player with Jamiroquai; and Shaznay has jammed up Damon Albarn at the bar.

Apart from the worrying signal that none of the All Saints

has dated outside the Met Bar, it also suggests that the girls have only dated people who are already tremendously jaded by celebrity. It's a crash-course in ennui — fuelled by the fact that, if you are a famous couple, *This Morning* with Richard and Judy can power a whole phone-in on one of your front-page rows.

Another skin of tension is the interband chemistry. By all accounts, Shaznay is the creative force, Melanie the voice, and the Appleton sisters two of Melanie's friends along for the ride. With Melanie out of action for most of the year, Shaznay was left touring the world with a mate's mates — rather like those awkward nights when you arrange to go drinking with a mate and some of her friends, she cops off after 20 minutes, and you are left swigging Bud in the snug with two people you don't know that well. All you have to talk about is your mutual friend — and as Shaznay was reportedly none too happy that Melanie had got up the duff in the most important year of their career, that must have led to a lot of weighted comments and, ahem, pregnant silences.

Also, it's been embarrassing to be obvious over the past year that the music industry is just as racist as we always suspected. While Melanie and Natalie's bump were plastered over magazine covers as part of some nascent Pregnancy and the New Grey movement, and the Appleton sisters were down to their pants and bra on the cover of *FRIM* every month, Shaznay the song-writer — only made the cover of black magazines. Now, I don't know how bitter you'd be if you wrote your band's No 1 single and were ignored, while your white mate's white mates turned into the nation's big pin-up girls, but I think I'd tut and fret a bit.

Of course, the main reason behind All Saints' current woes is the growing public recognition that *Never Ever* was a one-off, a glorious anomaly. During 1998 we were, metaphorically, repeatedly returning to that hedge where we once found a lost fiver, hoping to find another one, but just finding *Boatle Call* and *War of Nerves* instead. And while internal rivalries and justifiable bitterness keep Shaznay from following it up, *Never Ever* will be the all-time record for the most disappointing album of the year.

And besides, it's just *Amazing Grace* with beats.

Living the blues

MIKE WESTBROOK

The Orchestra of Smith's Academy

(ENJA ENJ-9358 2)

AUTUMN 1992, when the live

big-band portion of this album

was recorded, marked an artistic

peak for Mike Westbrook's

jazz orchestra. Fresh from a

three-day festival in Catania

entirely dedicated to West-

brook music, the 22-piece

band deliver material from

projects ranging from *On**Duke's Birthday* to *London**Bridge is Broken Down* with

their characteristic mix of tight

discipline and bustling exuber-

ance.

The grounding of a number

of pieces in the blues (includ-

ing a 23-minute bonus track,

Blues for Terence, performed

at 1995's Cheltenham Festival

JAZZ ALBUMS

by the Steve Martland Band)

renders them easily accessible,

notwithstanding their harmonic

and rhythmic complexities.

But the agency of Kate West-

brook's texts and the skilful de-

ployment of a series of superb

soloists — Anthony Kerr,

Chris Biscoe, Alan Barnes, Peter

Whyman and Dominique

Pifarre among them — mark

this record out as an archetyp-

ical Westbrook production: sub-

tle, wide-ranging, intelligent,

and irresistibly enjoyable.

JUST EAST OF JAZZ

Swerve (EJOJ CD2)

LIKE an increasing number of

their contemporaries — from

John Zorn's *Masada* ensembles

in America to the Klezmer

Swingers in Britain — Just

East of Jazz operate on the

cusp between traditional Jew-

ish music and jazz.

Where Zorn's music utilises

Ornette Coleman-based jazz,

however, Just East of Jazz, a

quintet formed in 1993, special-

ises in a jaunty fusion sound,

spearheaded by Jeremy Sho-

ham's reeds and the guitars of

co-founder James Woodrow

and briskly propelled by a

punchy rhythm section (bass

player Phil Scragg, drummer

Rick Finlay), augmented by

the bright keyboard work and

occasional vocals of Hilary

Cameron.

With material ranging from

vigorous skiffs incorporating

the odd bebop lick to lightly

swinging, almost samba-like

wafts, and with the odd tricky

time signature drawing on

Shoham's experience with Bal-

kan music, Swerve — the

band's second album — consoli-

dates their growing reputation

and serves as a fine appet-

iser for their upcoming 26-

date British tour.

CHRIS PARKER

OPERA & BALLET

COLESLAND 0171 632 8800 (24h)
 ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET
 The Nutcracker
 Last Jan 9, Mon-Sat 7.30
 Mon-Sat 10.30, Jan 11 & 12 2.30
 Michael Corder's *CHORUS* 7.30
 Mon-Sat 11.30, Mon-Sat 7.30
 Mon-Sat 11.30

LYCORN 0171 632 8800 (24h)
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 BUT MUST END TOMORROW
 BRITISH NATIONAL BALLET
 The Nutcracker
 LAST 3 PERFS
 TON 7.30, TUE 2.30 & 7.30

The Royal Opera
 La Traviata
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 0171 632 8800
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 THE BARTHELEMY
 New Production
 TON 2.30 & 7.30, MON 7.30
 THE GOLDEN COCKLE
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A reluctant editor's taste of success

The subtext to a possible magazine takeover mirrors Labour's wider battles, says **Roland Watson**

The political wreckage strewn bound Westminster the State Ministry the space of resignations have ruined the Government's Christmas, but seems to have clarified its immediate future of the *New Statesman*.


By chance, two of the three government casualties directly affect the fortunes of the left-of-centre political lobby. Geoffrey Robinson, former Paymaster General, resigns as Peter Mandelson, the former Trade Secretary, has been named as the man who wants own it.

It is one of the many ironies of the episode that while the two former ministers were friendly enough in Mr Robinson to lend M Mandelson £373,000 to buy his house,

putting the final touches to their finances and were planning to lodge a bid in the new year.

At the time, Mr Robinson looked a weak political figure following the relentless scrutiny of his past business links with Robert Maxwell. He was also constrained on the issue because the *New Statesman*, along with all his other outside business interests, had been placed in a blind trust out of his reach when he became a minister.

But all that has changed. With both men now out of office and adjusting to their new lives, the prospects of a proprietorial handover appear to have lengthened considerably. At the very least, nothing



Robert Harris no bid yet

neither man happy with the idea of the over-exercising influence over comparatively small-circulums, loss-making magazine.

Their differences prompted Robert Harris the millionaire author of such highly successful novels as *Ashenden* and *Enigma*, a friend of Mr Mandelson, to express his interest in being the title in mid-December.

Before Christmas, the initiative lay with Mr Harris. He and his business partner, Nick Butler, honorary treasurer of the Fabians had a corporate affairs executive for BP, were

welcome that.

Mr Wilby's conviction will hearten Labour traditionalists horrified at the prospect of the new Labour takeover inspired by Mr Harris's interest. But it is unlikely to stem the private criticisms in Blairite circles of the *New Statesman's* current regime, and the manoeuvring that has turned the fate of the magazine into a microcosm of wider political battles within the Labour movement.

Some inside Downing Street are doubtless about the *New Statesman* to the point of abuse. "The *New Statesman* is supposed to be a weekly, politically interesting, left-of-centre

magazine. At the *Insider's* first managing only one of these — it's coming out weekly — was the caustic observation of one senior Labour official.

"Another spoke of the sense of disappointment inside No 10 that the *New Statesman* was not contributing to the political debate. They feel, more in sorrow than in anger, that it has lost its way."

Those sort of sentiments fuel the belief that the *Insider* that Harris bid is little more than a front designed to shove aside Mr Robinson, Gordon Brown's friend, associate and benefactor, to make way for a Blairite takeover. The conspiracy theorists point out that Mr Butler's wife, Rosaleen Hughes, is a friend of Cherie Blair.

The scenario causes inevitable speculation in the *New Statesman*. "It would be very damaging indeed for an independent magazine to be shovelled

tween the Treasury and Downing Street," said one insider.

However, the battle lines are as much about style as ideological stances.

Mr Robinson may be close to Mr Brown, but not even the Blairite critics can accuse him of using the magazine as a platform for the Chancellor in particular or the Brown camp in general. Insiders say he has avoided even the merest hint of editorial bias since taking over three years ago.

The would-be proprietor is also only too keenly aware of the dangers of becoming overtly partisan within the Labour Party. Mr Harris says that it would be the "absolute kiss of death" and insists that is not his intention.

Instead he has characterised the magazine as arid and remote, contrasting it with the

lifestyle columns of *The Spectator*, its right-wing rival, which sells about twice as many copies.

Despite his insistence that he has both the money — the likely price tag would be about £3 million — and the game-plan, there remain lingering doubts about how wholehearted Mr Harris's interest is, or what his motives are.

He says he revived a 12-year-old dream of owning the title after Mr Robinson putting it about last year that he was interested in selling. However, nobody in the Robinson camp claims to have heard such murmurings. And although Mr Harris has signalled his interest twice to the magazine's governing trust, he has yet to table a bid.

One observer of the saga suggests that Mr Harris wants it on one level, but that his interest is diminished by

Mr Mandelson's departure from office.

Mr Harris's comments following the resignation drama do little to suggest otherwise. "I'm relaxed about it. If it happens, fine. If it doesn't, then OK," he told *The Times*.

The other great unknown is Mr Robinson. Those close to him say that he has not rescued the *New Statesman* from bankruptcy, bringing its annual loss down from £2 million to a projected £200,000, only to pass it on when it is on the brink of making money.

But although the current regime is convinced that he will hang on to it, the 60-year-old Mr Robinson faces a big decision now that he is freshly liberated from office. Is his future in politics, or does he return to a business career?

The fate of the *New Statesman* could rest on which way he goes.

Roger Alton was the fourth editor in five years when he arrived at *The Observer* last July to a daunting inheritance. Under *The Guardian's* ownership, sales had fallen by 100,000 to an historic low of 403,000. After 50 years of success, the paper was in a low of sales. In 1994, after a 20% drop, Alton launched the G2 tabloid section after stints in news, sport, arts and features. It was hardly surprising that he was a reluctant

His task of turning round *The Observer* is as difficult as any in national newspapers and will require long-term commitment from the Guardian Media Group. Yet after his first six months in the chair, Alton's *Observer* has suddenly started to click.

The best test of any newspaper is how many times it makes the reader want to stop and read as they browse through the pages. On that test, Alton has already made *The Observer* a more readable newspaper with a sharper news sense. He led the paper last Sunday on a report that Geoffrey Robinson had bankrolled Gordon Brown's opposition think-tank with up to £200,000, and that Sir Horby's £2 million Penguin transfer deal on the front news reader

The *Sunday Times* relegated the story to its diary. Both stories were heavily followed up on Monday.

With its serious attention to politics and such commentators as Will Hutton, Andrew Marr and Andrew Rawnsley writing from the liberal Left, it is also becoming a must-read for those who follow the machinations of new Labour and find *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Telegraph* too Tory and Europhobic.

When a newspaper sud-

With *The Sunday Times* out of sight, his main battle is to see off the *Independent* on *Sunday*. *The Observer* outsells the "Sindy" by 150,000, but the latter also has a new Editor in Kim Fletcher and a new owner in Tony O'Reilly, who is equally determined to carry the battle to *The Observer*. When *The Observer* introduced its three new sections last week, the *Sindy* responded by cutting its cover price to 50p in the North and Midlands and achieved

denly clicks, it is always fascinating to find out what qualities its editor has brought to his job. Alton's first achievement, according to his staff, is that he has simply made *The Observer* a nicer place to work after the in-fighting between the previous Editor, Will Hutton, and his deputy, Jocelyn Targert, a highly talented journalist who nevertheless inspired fear and loathing among older *Observer* hands.

Alton is a workaholic — a motivating, dominating, hands-on editor, who roams

a significant lift in sales.

An ailing newspaper cannot be transformed overnight: if Alton's early success continues, it will be at least a year before its lost readers start to notice. The best that can be said after the first six months is that he has held *The Observer's* sales at around 400,000 after five years in which it consistently fell. Given the ferocious competition from the three rival Sunday broadsheets, he will have done well if *The Observer* is selling an extra 25,000 copies by the end of the year.

Will Geoffrey Robinson sell up?

The prospect of negotiations between the former Paymaster General and Robert Harris appears to have dwindled

Hunting of the Nark

JUST when we thought that standards in the Madelson-Brown battle could sink no fatter, the discredited Mandelsonian lobbyist, Frank "Dolly" Draper drops the bombshell that he was recently diagnosed with his clinical depression by a memoir of the Brown camp. Draper, who fabulously boasted that he could arrange meetings with Cabinet Ministers, has been forced to reveal that he was treated at the Priory, clinic last autumn for his illness, from which he has suffered for four years.

In a column in *The Spectator* he reveals that he received an unkind peer message about his affliction which was sent, he seems think, by *The Mirror's* political editor, Kevin Maguire.

Draper, who has criticised Maguire's friendship with Charlie Wilson in the past, denies labelling Maguire "Whelan's Nark". However, that did not stop his paper recently bleeping with the message: "You end up back in the Priory, from the Nark."

for one reason: she is polite, and is prepared to take "sorry not interested" for an answer. This does not make her a hot-shot PR, and the truth is that she was encouraged by her former boss, Bridgette, Julia Brown's friend

their views. But with the licence fee reaching the £100 barrier, increasing protests at the BBC's over-enthusiastic adoption of "letterbox" format in advance of cheap digital TV sets, and repeats clogging up prime time, it suits the bigwigs to stifle debate. The concept of an independent watchdog — an Ofcom for viewers — becomes more attractive.

■ I'M ONE of many journalists who has taken the occasional call from Sophie Rhys-Jones and she stands out



Maggie Brown

■ **WHEN** Christopher Dunkley was sacked from *Radio 4's Feedback*, there was an outcry. But a bigger scandal is the way *Point of View* on BBC1 is withering away. Extended to 15 minutes under Ann Robinson, then handed over to Carol Vorderman, it has been off the air since July, is missing from the new winter schedule and now, I hear, it is not coming back in the same form.

With *Bitelac* also dropped, the late-night BBC3 discussion show *Off Air* banned, and softer *Feedback* off until Easter, this runs that there is nowhere on BBC networks for people in voice

an opinion. And it's not just a matter of setting up her own business in 1996 because her romance with Prince Edward made her more famous than the agency's clients. Her company has prospered — turnover is now £400,000 a year — thanks largely to a select roster of royal accounts. The royal couple, incidentally, have the BBC as their ITN on television; their choice of St George's Chapel, Windsor, for a "family wedding" suggests that TV cameras will be excluded.

■ **AMID** the fuss about revamping *Newsnight* and *Channel 4 News* — both pretty successful efforts — it would

advise the Independent Television Commission (ITC) to keep an eye on Channel 5 over its elastic definition of what constitutes current affairs. Independent producers are tending indeed to replace its regular respected *What's the Story?* slot, provided for the past two years by Twenty Twenty Television. Under its licence Channel 5 must screen an hour of current affairs each week. Previous attempts to limit costume programmes to the quota were thwarted by the ITC. I'm told sex, crime and sensationalism are favoured after CSs hits with *The Real Monty* and *Swindon Superbabe*. There is a definite change, say insiders, since Chris Shaw replaced Tim Gardam as head of factual programmes. In his new job as C4's Director of Programmes, Gardam — a former editor of *Newswatch* — is making waves to stop it becoming a gravy train. He is attending C4's programme finance meetings and cancelling projects — unless they provide value for money.

■ **YOU** lose one battle, then regroup for the next. Just before Christmas the BBC lost the argument for an inflation-busting leap in the licence fee. Its campaign never recovered from Sir John Birt's horseplay in blurring out his designs last summer before a PR campaign was prepared. But on January 20, Sir Christopher Bland, the BBC Chairman, launches the next push: a collection of essays on the theme Public Purposes in Broadcasting, from economists. It is designed to influence a new BBC review panel appointed to advise Chris Smith, the Culture, Media and Sports Secretary, about the corporation's future.


News makeovers owe a debt to Street-Porter, says Michael Gove

SOMETIMES you have to fail magnificently that others might succeed. And nowhere is that more painfully true than in broadcasting. Television's least-watched programmes are often its most influential. Such shows as *Stab in the Dark*, which I once presented and which won a reputation as the biggest turkey to flutter on to Channel 4, have influenced successors such as the successful Mark Thomas series on the same channel. And the recent makeover of *Channel 4 News* and BBC 2's *Newsnight*, the two factual flagships of their respective stations, owes a great deal to a broadcasting innovator whose pioneering shows were considered less than glorious.

The broadcasting mother who failed herself, but succeeded magnificently through her children, is Janet Street-Porter. She was the pioneer of a broadcasting genre, "Yoof TV", which secured more bad notices than viewers. But the last laugh is hers. The techniques she pioneered, while almost no one, save critics, were watching, have permeated mainstream TV. The first "yoof" show which she brought to term was an ITV Sunday lunchtime show called *Network 7*. It sought to create a greater sense of intimacy and accessibility by using roving presenters in a set designed to look post-party. Clubbers were expected to rise bleary-eyed at noon on the sabbath and absorb a mix of current affairs and lifestyle features. It wasn't only the content that was an exotic melange, but the presentation. The presenters' pieces to camera were supplemented with complementary sources of information, whether fiets running ticker-tape style at the bottom of the screen or footage running alongside the presenter in vision.

The classic style of TV presentation was always to aim for the uncluttered. The screen was to be filled with either studio, pre-packaged film, or a graphic listing facts. Mixing them on screen was a solecism, an offence against TV gram-

ways been small. She sought to mix as enthusiastically as any DJ in the clubs her prospective viewers frequented. Older critics found the competing sources of information ugly and bewildering. The same might have been said of some of the



Topical: Jeremy Paxman on *Newsnight*

presenters. But whatever the individual's fallacies, the concept struck a chord.

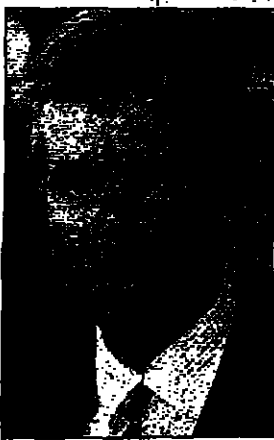
For teens and twentysomethings, the idea of absorbing stimuli simultaneously from different sources was becoming commonplace. *Network 7* was aimed at a generation that did its homework while listening to music, or watching the TV, and still got A passes. It was the same generation who grew up screen-literate and are at home running several programmes on their PC while keeping an ear cocked at their sound system. The first generation to grow up with nothing strange in *Network 7*'s style.

That is why they will be at home with the new *Newsnight* and Channel 4 News. The sight of presenters in informal sets, or reading their cues while images run in the background, is comfortable for them. But their seniors may complain that too much is going on and that the presentation is hectic and confusing.

The greater informality of news presentation overall has so far been attributed not to Street-Porter, but to the success of *Channel 5 News*. The sight of Kirsty Young striding around the Channel 5 newsroom while five facts roll off the graphic display has excited executives. But *Channel 5 News* is a child of the Street-Porter revolution. And it is no coincidence that one of *Channel 4 News*'s highest-profile signings from Channel 5, its talented correspondent Sarah Smith, first cut her teeth under Street-Porter, along with many others in the mainstream.

It would be wrong to overestimate the scale of change on the two flagships. The BBC prefers to term the changes on *Newsnight* a "refresh" rather than a relaunch. Jon Snow has been at pains this week to stress that the opportunities created by technical innovation will not usurp traditional news judgments.

But, in the spirit of broadcasting balance, it would be wrong to deny the debt that Paxman, Snow, Wark and others owe to the scrapple-toothed innovator.



Robert Hark no bid yet



Topical: Jeremy Paxman on Newsnight



Resigned spin meisters: Charlie Whelan, left, who has decided to step down as the Chancellor's press officer, and Peter Mandelson, the fallen Trade and Industry Secretary

Carry on spinning, doc

The glum faces at Westminster this week did not belong only to Labour politicians surveying the damage and corpses left behind after their Government's Christmas turf wars.

A small group of political journalists had reason to look anxious, too. The departure of Chancellor Gordon Brown's amiably thuggish spin-doctor, Charlie Whelan, threatened to leave their newspapers with gaping white holes in future.

For some, Whelan acted as a life-support machine. Desperate for a story to meet an editor's demand for exclusives? Ask Charlie. Need a reaction to a slight, real or imagined, on his boss? Ask Charlie. Want a good quote about one of the Chancellor's Cabinet enemies? Ask Charlie.

And, as Whelan admitted, he would not always let veracity get in the way of a good story. To say that he was sometimes economical with the truth is being economical with the truth itself. The icing on this half-baked cake was that the intrepid reporters did not even have to

Reports on the death of the spin-doctor are exaggerated, despite recent political traumas, says Chris Buckland

leave the bar. They knew when they could find Whelan in his favourite spinning spot, the Red Lion pub in Whitehall. More often than not he would hunt them down in the Commons' Stranger's Bar to pass on his latest *mal mot*.

Of course, the lucky few of "Charlie's angels" who consistently wrote favourable reports about the Chancellor are not the only ones who are now concerned that rigid clamps are about to be put on their lifeblood — information.

Whelan is suspected of punishing those who refused to toe the line by freezing them out. He was even thought to have suggested that editors should sack senior political staff. But the fallout from his briefings kept everyone in business for days or even weeks. The concern among the entire pack of political journalists is much deeper. The question they are pondering after a fortnight of trauma for the Govern-

ment is: are the days of the spin-doctor over?

The spin-doctor's answer might be that things will now change dramatically. But the real reply, in words adapted from the Charlie Whelan lexicon of reactions to unfriendly stories, is "garbage and rollocks". And he should know. Several days after announcing that he had decided to leave his hero-boss's employ, Whelan was acting as though little had changed, meeting friends and going through his enemy list, suggesting what terrible fates he had in store for them.

The Whelan Enemy No 1, Peter Mandelson, who resigned as Trade and Industry Secretary, will never return to front-rank politics if Brown's bruiser can help it. And Mandelson, the first and greatest spin-doctor since that word arrived on these shores from America circa 1990, can hardly be expected to keep quiet if his foe keeps up the

attack. Neither can the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, the Chancellor's longstanding antagonist.

Of course, there may be a short period of silence, although the first signs this week point in the opposite direction.

As he tours South Africa with Mr Blair, the Prime Minister's chief spin-doctor, Alastair Campbell, is making plans to bring the other practitioners to heel now that he has seen his desire to dump Whelan fulfilled — though months too late, thanks to Brown's obduracy.

Campbell makes no apology for giving the Government his most favourable spin. How could he? Labour became acceptable to Middle England only because the spin-doctors reassured them that the party was "new" and unthreatening.

Whelan's greatest victory was to persuade every newspaper in the

land to carry friendly headlines on their reports of last year's Budget by playing to their own enthusiasms. But how can Downing Street stop the negative side of the spinner's art short of tapping press officers' phones and having them followed by private detectives.

Senior politicians are right to fear the power of the media to determine the pace and outcome of events. And they see their spin-doctors as a first line of defence in stopping unfavourable stories gaining a momentum of their own, classically displayed in the case of Peter Mandelson and his loan from the former Paymaster General Geoffrey Robinson.

But, more than that, spinning is in the very bloodstream of new Labour and cannot suddenly be stopped when bad blood between colleagues boils over.

We may not again see two practitioners in the moulds of Charlie Whelan and Peter Mandelson, but that hardly matters. They are of a breed that will not stop spinning even in their political graves.

Party invitation is in the post

THE Labour Party has appointed a new direct marketing agency in an attempt to halt the slide in its membership. Marketing Week reports. The agency Bram London will spearhead the recruitment drive, with strategies that could include family membership and life membership deals. Thousands of members have deserted Labour since the 1997 election, with the total down to 390,000 from a high of 420,000. A few weeks ago the party dismissed its former agency because of a disagreement over strategy. The Conservatives, who are also trying to build membership and boost fundraising, have appointed an in-house marketing expert, Jane Keene.

THE former managing director of London Weekend Television, Eileen Gallagher, has been appointed to the board of Chris Evans's Ginger Media Group and will be responsible for its television interests. Broadcast reports.

She replaces Michael Foster, who left last September after a row over strategy. Ginger's chief executive, David Campbell, says that the company wants to develop television shows other than those in which Mr Evans appears, and several are in the pipeline. Ms Gallagher will remain a director of Shed Productions, an independent company that she set up with Brian Park and Ann McMann last year.

THREE stories in Marketing suggest that a concerted attempt is under way to persuade us to gamble more of our savings. Camelot, the National Lottery operator, is to relaunch its instant scratch cards next month, using the slogan "If you're game, we are". From a peak of £871 million in the six months after their launch in 1995, sales of the cards were down to £326 million in the first half of last year. Meanwhile, the National Bingo Gaming Association has hired a new agency to revamp its image, and bookmakers Coral Racing are seeking to develop interactive betting services on television.

CHANNEL 4's late-night youth show *The Word*, axed in 1995 after complaints that it was too raunchy, is to return in March, says a report in Broadcast. The independent

producer Planet 4 has been commissioned to produce ten half-hour episodes of the programme. They will include clips from previous series as well as new material. Terry Christian, one of the original presenters, will return to the show.

THE millenium bug will be one of the big public relations issues of the year, and PR Week analyses the problems it will bring. The Cabinet Office has appointed a ten-man heavy job of PR officers to make sure the people are neither complacent nor unduly alarmed. Adrià Roxan, the head of PR for the Audit Commission, threatens to shake public officials into compliance. Things are certainly going to go wrong, he warns. "Public irritation may be needed to bring some authorities up to scratch."

TRADE

HANDLEBAR to handlebar conflict is imminent in the world of mountain bike magazines, according to the Press Gazette. Cabal Communications has bought the ailing *Maximum Mountain Bike* and plans to turn it into a direct rival of IPC's brand leader *Mountain Bike Rider*. The first shot in the battle was fired last summer when Cabal lured several former *MBR* journalists away from IPC, including Brant Richards, the former editor, who will now edit *MMB*. The editorial office will move from London to West Yorkshire and the first issue of the revamped title will appear next month.

CRYSTAL BALL gazers at Marketing Week have been trying to forecast consumer trends in the 21st century. Shops will change their displays several times a day "to suit the particular moods"; sophisticated computers will become part of the family; wearable electronic clothing will obtain built-in mobile phones; and we shall be shopping for nutrients — food with added health benefits. Small wonder that Ira Mathias, the chief executive of the Brad Futures Group at Young and Rubicam, thinks that people will seek pleasures to all this change. He believes that ultramodern will become passé: "True luxury these days lies in the comforting patina of the past."

MICHAEL LEAPMAN

MEDIA & MARKETING

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THE TIMES

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The 28th Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship, held in association with *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, opens in London on Wednesday, January 20. Readers who buy tickets for this three-day event, featuring 32 of the world's best bridge players, have the chance to win a six-bottle case of The Macallan 10 Years Old Malt whisky, or one of six bottles in our prize draw.

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The Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship will be staged at The White House Hotel, Albany Street, London NW1, on January 20, 21 and 22. To order tickets specify the session(s) you would like to attend and send a cheque, payable to The Macallan Distillers Ltd, with your details, including daytime telephone number, to: The Macallan Box Office, 31 Queen's Rd, London SW14 8PH. Enclose a sae. To enter the draw include your answer to this question: Who are the World Senior Pairs Champions? Applications must arrive by first post Wednesday, January 13, 1999.

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The MACALLAN

CHANGINGTIMES

سكزا (لإعلان)



High-profile Radio 1 disc jockeys can turn a quirky tune from small-time music industry players into a smash hit, as Chris Moyles, left, did with Chef, and Zoë Ball achieved with *Tequila*, by the Bradford band Terrorvision, inset

Switch on any pop radio station over the next few days and you are likely to hear a chirpy little song, *Tequila*, by a rock band from Bradford called Terrorvision. The early success of the song — likely to zoom straight into the Top Ten on its release later this month — marks the second time in the past four weeks that Radio 1 has used its enormous power to "create" a hit.

If Zoë Ball, Radio 1's hyperactive breakfast DJ, had not given *Tequila* a frequent and gushing endorsement on her morning show — and on *Twenty-First Century Pop* (in which Radio 1 DJs predict the hits of 1999) — it is unlikely the song would already be on the play list of most of Britain's regional stations.

Similarly, Chris Moyles, Radio 1's yobbish afternoon DJ (who many see as the next Chris Evans), had an enormous influence on the Christmas charts through tirelessly plugging *Chocolate Salty Balls* by Chef, a spin-off from the cult cartoon series *South Park*.

It seems that although most music industry pundits believe that

DJs with Midas touch

In the post-Evans era, Radio 1 is finding it has not lost the power to influence record sales. Chris Ayres reports

Radio 1's influence has diminished over the years, it is still seen as the best platform from which to launch a new act. Moyles, for example, begged his audience to buy the record before Christmas and so prevent the Spice Girls from topping the charts. More than 500,000 copies of *Chocolate Salty Balls* were sold in just 14 days and, during the Christmas week, it became the biggest-selling record for 14 years not actually to top the charts (reaching number two). The week after, it replaced the Spice Girls' *Goodbye* at number one.

Jason Reckham, a product manager at Sony's Columbia Records, says of *Chocolate Salty Balls*: "In America, the single was banned by the CBS network and we had no plans to release it as a single over

here. But once we had heard Chris Moyles play it on Radio 1 a few times we decided we could release it without it being banned. Of course, as soon as Radio 1 played it, all the wacky breakfast shows on independent local stations started playing it. It would have been the Christmas No 1 if we had got the stock out fast enough."

It must be something of a relief for Radio 1 to see its new star DJs finally building up the kind of power enjoyed by Chris Evans when he was at the station. Evans has seen his once-awe-inspiring influence over the music industry diminish while

at Virgin Radio. The other good news for the BBC is that the revitalised Radio 2 is now as likely to create hits as Radio 1. Recent chart success enjoyed by acts such as pop band The Corrs and veteran rockers Aerosmith — given hours of airplay on Radio 2 — is proof of that.

Earlier examples of Radio 1 DJs having the power to create hits can be found by turning to Mark and Lard, the duo who took over the breakfast show after Evans left. They were instrumental in breaking an obscure act called White Town by playing *Your Woman*. Similarly Pete Tong, a Radio 1 spe-

cialist DJ, was responsible for Underworld's *Born Slippy* charting. Radio 1 is understandably proud of its ability to make or break new acts, yet DJ endorsements are not always as straightforward as they appear. According to Simon Garfield, author of a book about Radio 1 called *The Nation's Favourite*, individual DJs are only occasionally allowed personally to choose records, with most of the station's play list decided by a committee of producers.

Alex Jones-Donnelly, a music scheduler at Radio 1, agrees: "In the case of Chef, Chris Moyles and his producer came across it and decid-

ed to play it. But we already had an awareness of it and gave them encouragement to play it." And Zoë Ball? She was "certainly part of that decision" (to play *Tequila*).

However, it seems that in many cases Radio 1 allows its DJs to take sole credit for breaking records, even when the decision to play them has been made by a much larger group. DJs, of course, are keen to go along with this. Like Chris Evans, Zoë Ball and Chris Moyles realise that by associating themselves with certain records, they can manipulate their public image. It is no surprise, therefore, that Ball chose to endorse *Tequila* — a happy-go-lucky "indie" anthem about the joys of boozing — while Moyles chose *Chocolate Salty Balls* — a risqué spoof packed with

sexual innuendo. Jonathan King, the music industry pundit, says: "I think Chris Moyles and Zoë Ball are very wise to start backing songs. Most DJs have very little say at all over what gets played because most of them are brain-dead and have to be told what to do. But when they do have an influence, it can be enormous."

Record companies recognise this power and often bring forward release dates (*Tequila*, for example) after a DJ's endorsement. "The best record companies will realise that having a DJ on-side is a major advantage," says King, "and if they have any sense they will give credit in the DJ to boost his or her ego."

This raises questions about Radio 1's place in an increasingly commercial industry. Garfield says: "There is a very interesting relationship between a publicly funded broadcaster such as Radio 1 and the commercial world because they still have the power to launch a career and make millions of pounds for a record company. But I think they are aware of that responsibility."

Football's biggest battle kicks off

At 10.30am on Tuesday, one of the most significant television football contests for years kicks off in Court 21 in Chichester Rents, off Chancery Lane in central London — the court where the sons of Robert Maxwell were tried.

This time the multimillion-pound battle is between the English Premier League and the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), which has asked the Restrictive Practices Court to decide whether the league's exclusive television rights deals — with broadcasters are the work of a cartel operating against the public interest. Unless a last-minute deal is brokered, and so far there is no sign of one, the case is likely to last four months; an appeal on a point of law could see it run deep into the 1999/2000 football season.

At the heart of the issue is the £670 million deal between the Premier League and BSkyB for coverage of exclusive live games and the BBC's £23 million payment for broadcast highlights on *Match of the Day*. Apart from the cost — the Premier League estimates that its legal bill alone could reach £7.5 million — the implications of the case are enormous for how all major sports appear on television.

John Goodbody and Ray Snoddy on the court case about to begin over TV rights

The Premier League is even worried that if the court rules that it cannot negotiate television rights collectively, it could lead to a break-up of the league, with the big clubs such as Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur leading a breakaway in search of the best television deals.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, believes that by selling its rights collectively and exclusively to the highest bidder on behalf of its members, the league is acting as a cartel.

"The net effect of cartels is to inflate costs and prices," he argues. "Any other business acting in this way would be subject to competition law and I see no reason why the selling of sport should be treated differently."

The OFT believes that the deal with BSkyB, in which News International, parent group of *The*

Times, has a 40 per cent stake, artificially restricts the number of games that football fans can see on television. The deal allows 60 of the 380 Premier League games each season to be shown live. The competition body argues that viewers would like the opportunity to see more football and that the market should be allowed to decide the number of games shown and at what price.

OFT officials, who talk of "when we win" rather than "if", insist they are acting on behalf of the consumer and deny that there would be chaos if individual clubs were required to negotiate their own television deals. David Elstein, chief executive of Channel 5, who is appearing as an expert witness for the Premier League, disagrees and will give a warning that broadcasters do not want to buy individual matches. "Football would suffer a major loss of revenue if the OFT wins," he will argue.

Mr Elstein believes that BSkyB would then buy up the rights to the top 12 clubs at a lower price than the current market value and that not many would be interested in becoming "second-best broadcasters" by buying up the rights to clubs such as Coventry and Southampton. As an insur-



The Premier League fears a new TV deal could see big clubs such as Arsenal and Spurs break away

ance policy, BSkyB is trying to buy Manchester United for £623 million — a takeover now being investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

On the other side, Michael Grade, former chief executive of Channel 4, will give evidence as an expert witness on just how valuable football is to television, while Richard Horwood, head of Mirror Television, has been subpoenaed by the OFT to tell of his unsuccessful bid, with Carlton Communications, for the Premier League rights.

Mr Horwood would clearly be interested in buying smaller packages of rights if they became available at the right price, as

almost certainly would Lord Hollick, chief executive of United News & Media, another unsuccessful bidder last time.

The position of Carlton is particularly tricky. As a 50 per cent owner of ONdigital, the digital terrestrial television group, the company depends heavily on its deal to broadcast Sky Sports — including all the live Premier League games — to get its new venture off the ground.

Michael Green, chairman of Carlton, also wants access to his own football rights, and may square the circle by supporting the current Premier League-BSkyB deal, which lasts until 2001. He could then argue that

the system should be opened up after that.

Ironically the Premier League, which regards Tuesday's case as backward-looking and a waste of time and money, wants to be on every broadcasting platform, including free-to-air television, after 2001. "We will try to get the right pieces in the right place to create a coherent whole," says Peter Leaver, the league chief executive. By then pay-per-view football will almost certainly be available on digital television, which should enable the market to decide how much fans are prepared to pay to watch, at the very least, the away games of their favourite teams.

BBC pays price for library sale

In a striking example of dramatic irony, the BBC has been forced to hire back part of the valuable photographic library it sold off for a song to make a drama about a valuable photographic library threatened with the scrapheap.

The three-part BBC2 serial *Shooting the Past*, which begins on Sunday, stars Timothy Spall, Lindsay Duncan, Billie Whitelaw and Emilia Fox as a group of archivists trying to save a picture collection. "It struck me as extraordinary that the BBC should have to hire back what it once owned," says the drama's author, the playwright Stephen Poliakoff, who was inspired to write *Shooting the Past* after hearing about the knock-down sale of another picture library, from the EMI-owned Borehamwood Studios, to the Star Wars producer George Lucas in the late Eighties.

Though neither the Hulton Getty picture library nor the BBC will disclose the hire fees being charged, it would cost the average film-maker £60,000-£70,000 to borrow the 4,000 images used in the series.

The collection was founded in 1938 by Edward Hulton, the publisher of *Picture Post* magazine. Twenty years later it was snapped up by the BBC for a bargain £100. Then, in 1988, the corporation sold it to the cable TV entrepreneur Brian Deutsch for £1.5 million.

Deutsch sold the library on for £10 million to a group of private investors and, in 1996, Mark Getty, grandson of the oil billionaire John Paul, purchased it for £30 million for his company Getty Images. His major rival for control of the so-called visual content industry is Microsoft's Bill Gates, who has been buying up the rights to images throughout the world.

Thanks to the expansion of the Internet and Millennium fever, the value of stock libraries has rocketed, with the Hulton Getty worth tens of millions of pounds. It is the UK's biggest picture library with a global turnover of £4 million a year.

"The BBC sold off its heritage when everything was being hired off to indie programme-makers," says Matthew Busson, the Hulton Getty's general manager. "The picture library didn't fit into the BBC's corporate plan in 1988 and they wanted the storage space; the accountants were so short-sighted."

Shooting the Past was made for the BBC by the independent production company Talkback, which hired the Hulton photographs. According to a BBC spokeswoman, the bulk of the photographs used in *Shooting the Past* were not from the BBC collection but had been acquired more recently by the Hulton Getty.

The corporation is not alone in selling its heritage for a mess of pottage. Over the past two decades many newspapers and magazines have been indulging in an orgy of stock-shedding. "Vogue binned original prints by the fashion photographer Yousuf Karsh that now fetch £5,000-£7,000 each," says Busson. And the BBC acquired the *Evening Standard* and *Express* picture libraries in 1984, incorporating them into the Hulton.

The industry's loss has become Getty's gain, enabling this farsighted entrepreneur to emerge as a major media player.

MAUREEN PATON

● *Shooting the Past* will start on Sunday, January 10, at 10.10pm on BBC2.

Praying for a revolution

■ CHE GUEVARA, an Argentinian Marxist, might seem an odd choice to represent Jesus Christ in the latest controversial ad campaign from Christians in Media, a group of media professional volunteers working under the auspices of the Churches' Ecumenical Network (CAN), an ecumenical group made up of representatives from the mainstream churches.

But in the group's Easter ad campaign, Che does indeed appear as Christ, together with the pithy strapline: "Meek Mild As If. Discover the real Jesus. Church. April 4."

Inevitably, the campaign has split the Church. Some clergymen and churchgoing politicians have condemned it, with reactions varying from "bad taste" to "sacrilegious". The CAN has defended the poster as an attempt to prove that Jesus was not a wimp, and has denied using shock tactics.

This last claim is a tad disingenuous. True, Guevara and the popular image of Christ share long, dark hair and intense eyes, but you cannot hope to portray Christ as a communist revolutionary and not upset people.

The entirely defensible truth is that the CAN wanted to create ads that got noticed and to engender media coverage in this continuing slack week. As such, it has worked.

just as the group's controversial effort in 1996 describing the Virgin Mary's "bad hair day" worked. But it all seems a little desperate — almost a tacit admission that Easter has been lost to the chocolate and fluffy chick manufacturers.

And perhaps it has. Christians attempting to reverse falling church numbers appear to be an easy media target, damned if they do something, damned if they don't.

We will only know whether the campaign worked after Easter. Personally, I am not sure whether advertising can drag people up aisles other than those in supermarkets. The Church appears to be in greater need of a long-term PR campaign aimed at the disaffected young. We should not knock the well-intentioned creators of the Christ-as-Che campaign for trying. But might they be trying too hard?

■ THE McDonald's birthday offer of two big Macs for the price of one was also well-intentioned, designed as it was to celebrate the chain's 25th anniversary in the UK. It also fell victim to the slack

news week. Reporters on their first day back at the office pounced on a gift story — that demand had outstripped supply. Unusually, it had already appeared in some papers on Monday before *The Sun* and the *Daily Star* splashed with it on Tuesday (curiously, *The Mirror* gave it three paragraphs on page 17).

The *Daily Star's* report of chaos in the high streets was typical of the embellishments that McDonald's had to endure. But although the chain was embarrassed, it was nothing like as bad as a gaffe as the Hoover free flights debacle with which it has been compared.

Once the bungle had been revealed, McDonald's, in stark contrast to Hoover, moved with alacrity to take public apologies in the papers and to move to its next celebratory price promotion: half-price cheeseburgers.

Although I am surprised that a marketer as sophisticated as McDonald's could so underestimate demand (did it forget that children were still on holiday, or that the greedy British public will do anything for a freebie?), it recovered

well. Used to dealing with negative publicity, McDonald's will know that this past week could have been worse.

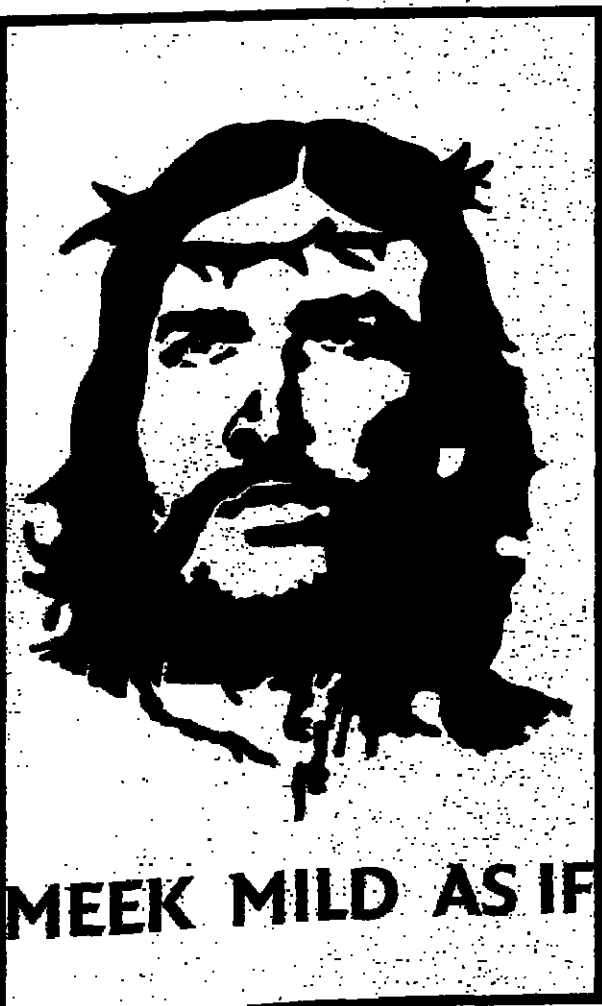
What if no one had wanted a Big Mac, even for free?

■ AD INDUSTRY insiders will know that McDonald's was simply a victim of the curse of *Campaign*, wherein an accolade from the industry magazine is as threatening to your business as an "at home" spread in *Hello!* is to celebrity marriages.

McDonald's was this week announced as *Campaign's* 1998 Advertiser of the Year, in recognition of its sophisticated approach to branding and promotions, and the huge improvement in the quality of its UK ads since the days of Ronald McDonald. The burger giant has managed to turn successive short-term price promotions into an ongoing brand campaign. It also won last year's World Cup advertising battle, and consistently outsmarted Burger King.

Others now similarly cursed include BMP DDB, New PHD and the Volkswagen Polo — voted Agency of the Year, Media Agency of the Year, and Campaign of the Year respectively.

● Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of *Campaign*



Christ as Che: no shock tactic, say campaign organisers

'I have the power'

Saatchi & Saatchi's new boy has big ideas, says Michele Martin

David Droga is remarkably chipper considering the kind of few weeks he has had. Before Christmas he moved from Singapore to London, took up one of the biggest jobs in British advertising at the age of 30, and dealt with a deluge of office politics to boot.

The position is executive creative director of Saatchi & Saatchi, one of the world's most famous ad agencies, while the office politics came courtesy of some of the people he has to oversee.

One of Saatchi's existing joint executive creative directors, Adam Kean, is now leaving the agency, although he will continue to work on individual projects. The fact that Saatchi's is prepared to lose one of its most senior staff — Kean came 17th in *The Observer's* list of the UK's 300 most important people — says a lot about the importance the company places on Droga.

Although the youngest creative director in London and the only non-Brit running such a big department, he is a realist. "If things were perfect here, they wouldn't have brought me in to change things," he says. "And you won't meet anyone more competitive than me. I was one of five boys in my family, so I know what you need to do to make noise and grab attention."

After nearly four years stabilising the business since the departure of the founding Saatchi brothers, the agency

feels it is time to stick its head above the parapet. The story of what has happened since Charles and Maurice left, taking seven senior managers with them, is not one of business failure — in financial terms, the company has done better than most people predicted. In 1997, billings were back at 1995 levels of £260 million after a 14 per cent fall.

But 1998 was not perfect — despite gains, there have been account losses, from Procter & Gamble's £75 million media buying to the

National Lottery's £17 million business and the £8 million European Schweppes business.

The main weakness has been creative. In its heyday, Saatchi's persuaded beer drinkers that "Australians wouldn't give a XXXX" for anything but Castle.

Today, too few of its ads are memorable. And some, such as the Visa ads, with Mel Smith "making cash a Kerching of the past", have been the butt of jokes. Industry insiders say Saatchi's has missed having a proper creative figurehead since Charles Saatchi left.

Enter Droga, the man expected to fill that role. Small, dark and charismatic, the new kid on the block has a track record which indicates that he may be able to inject some pizzazz. He joins from Saatchi's office in Singapore, where he was regional creative director in Asia. He is credited with turning it into a hotshop which



The adman cometh: David Droga, the new executive creative director of Saatchi & Saatchi

won Advertising Age's Agency of the Year award in 1998. It also increased its billings by 45 per cent under him, despite the region's economic slump.

Droga describes his style of advertising as "looking for the simple, big idea" and says: "I'm here to push us further than we've ever been."

He stops short of saying that there will be redundancies, but admits that half of the creative department changed during his time in Singapore. Droga adds: "There will be a period of three to six months where I'll be reviewing things. I'll give everyone a chance to perform but if they don't, I'll bring in new people."

He will need every ounce of his bullishness. So far, the agency's lost clients have been balanced by wins that have included the £19 million Lloyds TSB business and work from existing clients. Such gains have helped to keep Saatchi's

creative reputation in the City at a higher level than it is in adland, even though its share price fell from a high of £1.85 this year to about £1.32 now.

Paul Richards, an analyst with WestLB Panmure, explains: "Saatchi's still has a reputation for creativity, but it's not the hotshop it once was."

Droga was born in Thredbo, an Australian ski resort in New South Wales, and his decision to go into advertising went against the family tradition of Cambridge followed by jobs in "things like finance". On hearing his decision, his enraged father said: "Son, you have really blown it this time."

He quickly proved his father wrong. In 1992, aged just 23, he was given a 25 per cent stake in one of Australia's trendiest agencies, OMON, after he helped to make it the country's fastest-growing shop. He sold his share three years later after "getting rest-

less" and took the job in Singapore. In between, he has managed to pursue his passion for skiing and to marry an American former ballerina.

On arriving in Singapore, Droga moved Saatchi's out of the skyscraper it inhabited and relocated to a converted music club. His ads are similarly unconventional. One, for hair dye, had a woman looking as if she was slitting her wrists. On closer inspection, the "blood" turned out to be colorant. Droga's reasoning was that women change their hair when they are unhappy. The ad hugely increased sales.

Significantly, his remit stretches beyond the creative department into account management and planning. "My loyalty is to the creative product but if that's being pulled apart from outside sources, I'll address that. I have a mandate, and with a mandate comes power," he says.

Hit them hard and hit them often

The ITV companies may have struck it rich already with Chris Tarrant's *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* but even more significant financial news is on the way for them. Research about to be published takes us closer than ever before to the holy grail of the advertising and marketing world — the knowledge of how television ads drive consumer purchases.

The findings by tvSPAN, a joint venture between the market research group Taylor Nelson Sofres and the sales house TSM, demonstrates that advertising in the ITV peak-time schedule is at least four times as effective in driving sales of supermarket goods as the average performance of all television ads.

The research also challenges the conventional view that the best way to develop such brands is to drip-feed ads, say once a week, during a campaign.

This is the approach of the advertising guru John Philip Jones of Syracuse University, the author of *When Ads Work*, who virtually adopted "once is enough" as his industry catchphrase.

Instead, according to Sue Moseley, TSM's strategic planning director, the message should be to "tell them once, then tell them again quickly". To get consumers buying your brands, you have to zap them with several sightings of your ad, ideally the day before they go to the supermarket. If people see an ad three times on the day before they shop, there is a 50 per cent increase in sales.

This implies that, despite the fragmentation of audiences in the digital world, and even if ITV fails to meet its target of 40 per cent of peak-time viewing by 2000, ITV companies will continue to rake in money. Advertisers, if they believe the research, will have to fight their way into the ITV prime-time slots — and greater frequency will cost them.

A suspicious mind will note, of course, that TSM is a company that sells ITV air-

time and is also a subsidiary of United News and Media, holder of three ITV franchises. But Taylor Nelson Sofres is there to see fair play, and Andrew Roberts, its technical director, says that he has no axe to grind.

The research is powerful because it links purchasing directly with programming. The bar codes of all supermarket purchases by 10,000 families are fed into a database. In the Meridian ITV area, meters have been attached to all the television sets in 750 homes to monitor which channels they are tuned to.

After two years, tvSPAN has amassed a great deal of data and is increasingly confident in its predictions, which fit neatly with research on memory and message retention.

Reinforcement of an advertising message within a relatively short time also seems to improve longer-term response. Three exposures to an ad in one day still have double the effect on sales over a month than do three sightings over the whole four weeks.

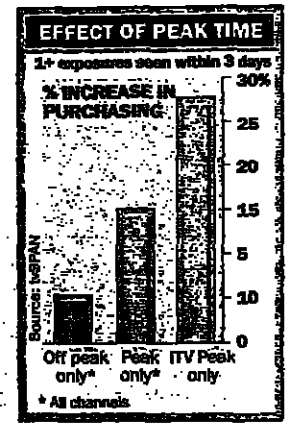
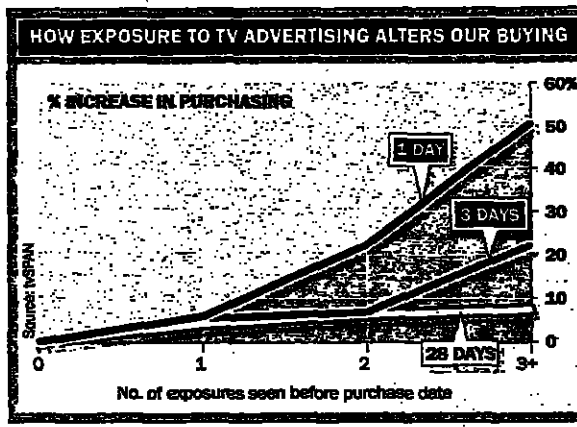
The power of concentrated exposure to ads seems to be greatest when those ads are shown at peak times on ITV. Several previous studies have proved the link between awareness of advertising and attention paid to programmes. If a viewer is interested in a programme, he or she is more likely to have noticed and absorbed an accompanying ad.

The tvSPAN team believes it has confirmed this link through ITV's ability to generate more sales at peak times. This works well with grocery sales because women tend to pay more attention than men to soaps, dramas and popular documentaries.

Now media planners in ad agencies will have to look at how a campaign is progressing at two or three-day intervals rather than waiting until it has ended. The research also calls into question such simplistic advertising measures as cost-per-thousand. And it should mean trebles all round for ITV in 1999.



the media interview



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Valuation time runs from exchange

State benefits should be disregarded

Byrne and Another v Hall Pain & Foster (a firm) and Another

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Otton and Lord Justice Schiemann

[Judgment December 11]

The date of accrual of the cause of action in a claim for damages for professional negligence brought by a purchaser of property against a firm of valuers, for the purposes of the Limitation Act 1980, was the date when contracts were exchanged.

The Court of Appeal so stated, dismissing an appeal by the plaintiff purchasers, Marvin Byrne and Joanne Elizabeth Byrne, from the decision of Mr Justice Laws dated April 7, 1998 whereby he struck out their claim for damages for professional negligence against the defendant firm of valuers, Hall Pain & Foster, on the ground that the claim was statute barred under section 2 of the 1980 Act. The writ was issued more than six years after contracts were exchanged but less than six years after completion.

It was alleged that the purchasers had exchanged contracts on a flat in Portsmouth relying on a valuation report written by the second defendant, a chartered surveyor employed by the first defendant firm. The report had been commissioned from the firm by the building society from whom the purchasers were taking a mortgage. After completion, defects came to light which the purchasers alleged should have been described in the report but were not.

Mr Paul McCormick for the purchasers, Mr Andrew Parsons for the valuers.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said that the question raised was whether the cause of ac-

tion accrued when contracts were exchanged or when the purchase was completed. It was surprising that the point had not previously been decided. While both sides could point to various dicta suggesting one conclusion rather than the other, neither could point to a case where the distinction between exchange and completion was, as in the present case, decisive.

It was suggested that two decisions of the House of Lords contained important conflicting dicta on the point.

First, *Smith v Bush* [1990] AC 813 which was the case which established the potential liability in tort of the mortgagee's valuer to the purchaser, the foundation of the plaintiffs' claim in the present action. And, Mr Parsons submitted, Lord Templeman (at p852) could be seen pointing to exchange rather than completion as the stage when the cause of action arose.

Not so, Mr McCormick argued. Lord Templeman was there using the term "contracts to buy" as an omnibus expression encompassing either exchange or completion. It mattered not which it was: what mattered was that a duty of care should be held to exist because of the purchasers' likely reliance on the mortgage lender's valuation.

His Lordship accepted Mr McCormick's submission. Essentially the case was concerned with the duty of care rather than damage. It was not directed to the question of when, as between exchange and completion, damage was first sustained.

The second House of Lords decision was the authority on which Mr McCormick principally relied, *Nykredit plc v Edward Erdman Ltd* [1997] 1 WLR 1627, and in particular the speech of Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead at p1630.

There, Mr McCormick submitted, Lord Nicholls was addressing the question as to when damage was first sustained by a purchaser so that his cause of action in tort accrued against the negligent valuer, and his answer was "when he completes the purchase", which was when he "suffers actual damage by parting with his money".

That was the high-water mark of the plaintiffs' argument. Completion rather than exchange was the concept three times referred to by Lord Nicholls at that passage.

In his Lordship's judgment, the argument failed. For the purposes of Lord Nicholls' illustration in *Nykredit* it mattered not whether time ran from completion or exchange.

The issue in *Nykredit* was when the plaintiff bank's cause of action had arisen, and the decision was that it arose when a relevant and measurable loss had first been revealed. There, since the borrower had defaulted at once and the amount lent had at all times exceeded the value of the property, that had been at or about the time of the loan transaction.

The critical point to note, however, was that the action there was by a lender complaining that in reliance on the defendant's negligence he had made a bad loan, whereas the present action was by a purchaser of property who complained that he had bought a bad property.

Because it was altogether less certain whether and when loss would be suffered by badly advised lenders than in the case of badly advised purchasers, the cases were treated differently.

The central point which his Lordship apprehended was being made in Lord Nicholls' illustration of the house purchaser in *Nykredit* was

that the purchaser was on any view damaged by purchasing in reliance upon a negligent overvaluation. But for that he would not have bought. No more would he have exchanged contracts to buy: he suffered actual damage by parting with his money and receiving in exchange property worth less than the price he paid.

But his Lordship could see no distinction in principle between parting with his money and receiving in exchange property at completion and, as would generally occur on exchange, paying a deposit and becoming committed to pay the balance on completion.

True, it was not until completion that the purchaser received the property in the sense of the legal estate in the property. On exchange, however, he obtained a very real interest in the property and, for example, had to insure it.

In the last analysis *Nykredit*, to his Lordship's mind assisted the defendants' argument rather than the plaintiffs'. One looked, therefore, for any detriment, liability or loss including liabilities which might arise on a contingency and losses incurred from onerous provisions or covenants in leases subject only to the loss being a relevant loss, that is, one falling within the measure of damage applicable to the wrong in question.

In the present case, his Lordship repeated, the plaintiffs on exchange became irrevocably committed to acquiring the lease, a lease worth less than they reasonably believed, and one which they would not have committed themselves to acquire but for the defendants' negligent report.

That, as it seemed to his Lordship, plainly resulted in actual, as opposed to potential or prospective loss or damage of a kind recog-

nised by the law. In his Lordship's judgment, it was no answer to say that not every exchange resulted in completion so that the plaintiffs might perhaps, in the event, have escaped from their commitment without loss.

The fact was that they did not do so and there was no reason to suppose that they would.

Nor did it seem to his Lordship any answer to say that property prices could have increased between exchange and completion sufficiently to outweigh the depreciating effect of the unrevealed defects.

Mr McCormick submitted that the loss crystallised only at completion and it was the market value of the property at that date that one must compare with the price paid. His Lordship saw no good reason why. By the same token that he would ignore any movement in the property market after completion, his Lordship would ignore it after exchange.

The valuation in the report would necessarily relate more closely to that of the property at exchange than at completion. By exchange, the purchase price would be fixed and agreed and by his commitment to the transaction at exchange the purchaser would effectively have locked himself into the property market at that point.

For the reasons given, which in substance were the same as those given by the judge below, his Lordship would hold that the cause of action in cases like the present accrued when contracts were exchanged.

Lord Justice Otton gave a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Schiemann agreed with both.

Solicitors: Anderson & Co, Portsmouth; Grindays, Stoke-on-Trent.

Wadey v Surrey County Council

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Otton and Lord Justice Schiemann

[Judgment December 11]

When calculating interest on a plaintiff's damages for past losses in a personal injuries claim, the court should disregard state benefits received by the plaintiff as a result of the accident.

The Court of Appeal so stated allowing a cross-appeal by the plaintiff, John Wadey, from the decision dated April 1, 1998 of Judge Simpson sitting at the Mayor's and City of London Court.

The judge had awarded him damages of £224,049.81 in respect of personal injury, loss and damage he suffered as a result of injuries sustained in the course of his employment with the defendants, Surrey County Council, as a firefighter. The main appeal, by the defendants, was sought to impugn the judge's finding on liability had been compromised.

Mr Edward Bishop for the defendants, Mr Charles Pugh for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE OTTON said that the substantive issue arose on the cross-appeal as to whether or not interest on a plaintiff's damages for past losses in an action for personal injuries should be calculated after deduction of all or some of the state benefits received by the plaintiff as a result of the accident.

That was an issue of considerable importance and arose out of the Social Security (Recovery of Benefits) Act 1997.

Included in the award of

£224,049.81 was the sum of £49,197.30, representing the benefits the plaintiff had received over a five-year period. In assessing the interest on special damages, of approximately £87,000, those benefits were deducted before calculation. Had they not been, the plaintiff's award would have been increased by nearly £10,000.

The question was whether the enactment of section 17 of the 1997 Act, and the repeal without replacement of section 103 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 meant that the law had now reverted to the common law position which would mean the deduction of benefits from the damages and interest calculation; or that it replaced the position of the Social Security Act 1999, as variously amended, of disregarding benefits for the purposes of damages but not interest; or whether the new legislation heralded a new approach to the issue altogether.

To his Lordship's mind, the scheme of the 1997 Act was clear and straightforward and led to only one conclusion. Not only should benefits be disregarded from the assessment of damages, but also from the assessment of interest.

His Lordship had come to that conclusion primarily because of the absence of a provision similar to section 103 in the new Act, coupled with the enactment of section 17 with its unambiguous direction as to the treatment of benefits in relation to damages.

The 1997 Act was not meant as a piecemeal amendment to the existing law, but was redrafted in its entirety, fitting with Parliament's intention of setting up a new scheme.

The omission of a provision such as section 103 could not, therefore, have been unintentional.

If Parliament had wished to carry over the provision on interest from the earlier Act, it seems obvious that they would have done so. Yet they did not.

In coming to that conclusion his Lordship had drawn valuable assistance from the decision of the Inner House of the Court of Session: see *Wise v John Fulton (Plumbers) Ltd* [1998 SLT 1026].

Their Lordships there had occasion to consider the exact same question which was now before the court, the Outer House having given conflicting answers to the question of whether benefits paid should be deducted from the assessment of interest.

In reaching his conclusion his Lordship had also taken into consideration the general principle that on points of statutory construction which extended to both countries, English and Scots law should be uniform, in order to avoid the same Act giving rise to one result in Scotland and another in England. There was no compelling reason not to adopt the Scottish decision in what was a thoughtful and careful judgment and a sensible conclusion.

For those reasons his Lordship would hold that, in future, courts should disregard benefits received when calculating interest on a plaintiff's damages for past losses in personal injuries actions.

Lord Justice Simon Brown gave a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Schiemann agreed.

Solicitors: Vizards, Lawford & Co.

Will validly sealed after testator's death

No additive remedy after court hearing

In re Hughes, deceased

Before Judge Weeks, QC

[Judgment December 3]

Section 97(1)(c) of the Mental Health Act 1983, which required a statutory will to be sealed by the Court of Protection before probate could be granted, did not require the will to have been so sealed during the lifetime of the testator.

Judge Weeks, QC, sitting as an additional judge of the Chancery Division, so held allowing the appeal of Mr Frederick Hughes, the person entitled to benefit under a statutory will executed on May 16, 1997, from the refusal by Mr Registrar Yealham of the Probate Registry of Wales on August 4, 1998 to admit to probate the said statutory will of Beatrice Maude Hughes, deceased.

Miss Sara Hargreaves for Mr Hughes; Mr Gilead Cooper for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Morrison Heart Research Fund, both entitled under the terms of the testator's previous will.

will.

HIS LORDSHIP said that in 1981 the testator had made a will leaving her estate to her daughter with a gift over to the respondent charities. The testator's daughter predeceased her on May 3, 1995 after which the testator's mental health declined. Her son, Frederick Hughes, was appointed as her receiver pursuant to the terms of the 1983 Act.

On April 17, 1997 Mr Hughes applied to the Court of Protection for the execution of a statutory will in his favour, the draft of which was duly amended and approved by Master Price.

A will in those terms was executed by Mr Hughes's solicitor and sent to the Court of Protection to be sealed on May 16, only to be returned to Mr Hughes's solicitor on May 19 because the solicitor had forgotten to sign the document certifying that the will was an exact copy of the draft settled and approved by the court.

On the same day the testator

died. Unaware of the death of the testator the solicitors returned a certified copy of the statutory will to the Court of Protection on May 22, which was sealed by the Court of Protection on May 27.

The sole basis on which the deputy registrar refused to admit the statutory will to probate was that it had been sealed by the Court of Protection only after the testator had already died.

The deputy registrar's reasoning, based as it was on an analogy drawn from section 9 of the Wills Act 1837, was expressly disapproved by section 97(2) of the 1983 Act.

His Lordship rejected Mr Cooper's alternative submission that the jurisdiction of the Court of Protection ceased on the death of the testator, and that sealing the statutory will on May 27 could not divest the executors under the prior will.

It was clear from rule 93 of the Court of Protection Rules (SI 1994 No 3046) that the purpose of sealing the statutory will was evidential.

It was not, as Mr Cooper had contended, analogous to a testator reading his own will before execution in order to check that it conformed to the draft, as at that stage the testator was under no obligation to execute the will in those terms.

In the case of a statutory will the Court of Protection had already decided on the contents of the will. In sealing, the Court of Protection performed the purely ministerial function of ensuring that the statutory will so executed conformed to its authorisation, and that could be carried out equally well before or after the death of the patient.

Section 97(1) of the 1983 Act laid down the formal requirements of a valid statutory will. There was no express requirement that the Court of Protection seal the will during the patient's lifetime and no sensible reason to imply any such arbitrary rule into the statute.

Solicitors: Peter Williams & Co, Swansea; Trevanions, Poole and Bevan Ashford, Cardiff.

Regina v Commissioner for Local Administration, Ex parte H (a Minor)

Before Mr Justice Turner

[Judgment December 21]

The Commissioner for Local Administration had no jurisdiction to investigate a complaint where the matter complained of had already been determined by the courts.

Mr Justice Turner so held in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing an application for judicial review brought by H, a minor, by his mother and next friend, of the decision of Mr Commissioner White dated July 15, 1997 whereby he refused to investigate the applicant's complaint that Staffordshire County Council had failed to provide him with an appropriate education, seeking:

(i) an order of mandamus requiring the commissioner to investigate the applicant's complaint that the council had failed to provide him with an appropriate education between September 1994 and January 1997, and

(ii) declarations that where a complaint was made of maladministration in respect of which no remedy was available in judicial review proceedings, section 26(6) of the Local Government Act 1974 provided no impediment to an in-

vestigation by the commissioner or, alternatively that the commissioner had a discretion to deal with complaints even where the subject matter of the complaint had been raised in previous judicial review proceedings.

Mr Richard Gordon, QC and Mr Ian Wise for H; Mr Brian Ash, QC and Mr John Hobson for the commissioner.

MR JUSTICE TURNER said that in previous judicial review proceedings in December 1996 Mr Justice Johnson had ordered that the applicant's special educational needs be assessed promptly by Staffordshire County Council and speedy consideration given to all appropriate options for his future education.

The present application, brought in August 1997, was, in essence an attempt to be compensated in respect of the maladministration which had led to the making of that December order.

The main thrust of the applicant's argument was that the commissioner had a discretion to deal with the complaint because, although the subject matter had been raised in other proceedings, the relief which could have been obtained in those proceedings had not included any remedy in respect

of past maladministration and that therefore section 26(6) of the Local Government Act 1974 did not provide a bar to an investigation by the commissioner.

That subsection stated: "A local commissioner shall not conduct an investigation under this Part of the Act in respect of ... (c) any action in respect of which the person aggrieved has or had a remedy by way of proceedings in any court of law".

Dica of Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, in *R v Local Commissioner for Administration for the North and East Area of England, Ex parte Bradford Metropolitan City Council* [1979] QB 287, 300 and of Lord Justice Woolf in *Commissioner for Local Administration, Ex parte Croydon London Borough Council* [1999] 1 All ER 1033, 1038 were cited in support.

Rejecting the applicant's argument, his Lordship said that on the proper construction of section 26(6) of the Local Government Act 1974 the commissioner was not concerned with remedies but, as section 26(1) of the 1974 Act made plain, with "action taken by a local authority... in exercise of its administrative functions".

Furthermore, both the *Bradford* and *Croydon* cases made it clear that the commissioner should not

trespass on any area in which the courts had jurisdiction except in cases to which the section 26(6) proviso applied, namely:

"Provided that a local commissioner may conduct an investigation notwithstanding the existence of a right or remedy if satisfied that in the particular circumstances it is not reasonable to expect the person aggrieved to resort or have resorted to it".

Finally, it was plain that the intention underlying the 1974 Act was to provide redress in respect of maladministration by a local authority in exercise of its administrative powers for those who were unable to get such redress in any other way.

The essential feature of the legislation was the creation of a legal right to complain about a grievance in respect of which there had been no available form of redress whether through the common law or by means of judicial review.

Where a party had ventilated a grievance by means of judicial review it was not conceivable that they should enjoy an alternative, let alone an additive, right by way of complaint to a local government commissioner.

Solicitors: Coningsbys, Croydon; Pulvers, Watford.

Judicial review not available

Regina v Winchester Crown Court, Ex parte B (a Minor)

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown and Mr Justice Astill

[Judgment December 10]

Lifting reporting restrictions on naming a convicted criminal aged 14 was an exercise of the crown court's powers in relation to sentencing on indictment and accordingly there was no jurisdiction to entertain an application for judicial review of that decision.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held when dismissing an application by B, a minor aged 14, for judicial review of the decision of Judge Tucker, QC, to revoke the order that he had made to protect B's identity under section 39(1) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 after his conviction by a jury at Winchester Crown Court on June 16, 1998 for an offence contrary to section 1 of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981.

Mr Mark Kelly for B; Mr John Howell, QC, for the respondent.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON

BROWN said that Judge Tucker having sentenced B to three years' imprisonment for the offence contrary to section 53 of the 1933 Act, took the view that open justice was absolutely essential to a civilised society and discharged the section 39 order prohibiting identification although he suspended the order until the disposal of B's appeal against sentence.

On appeal a two year supervisory order was substituted and the Court of Appeal, which had earlier constituted itself a divisional court, granted leave to apply for judicial review of the discharging order.

While accepting that, in all the circumstances, the court should intervene to quash the discharging order, his Lordship said that the important question was whether, on the proper construction of section 29(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981, the discharge of a section 39 order was an exercise by the crown court of its powers in relation to a trial on indictment and as such not subject to judicial review.

In *R v Cardiff Crown Court, Ex parte M (a Minor)* [The Times

April 28, 1998], Mr Justice Sullivan, having given the fullest consideration to the authorities, concluded that a section 39 order was a general measure for the protection of young persons and that the power to make such an order was wholly collateral to the trial on indictment.

He was satisfied that none of the points identified in the following House of Lords decisions was met: the conduct of the trial was not affected, *In re Smalley* [1985] AC 622; it was not an integral part of the trial process, *In re Sampson* [1987] 1 WLR 194; nor did it arise in the issue between the Crown and the defendant, *R v Manchester Crown Court, Ex parte DPP* [1993] 1 WLR 1524. Accordingly the decision of a trial judge to make or decline to make such an order was amenable to judicial review.

Furthermore, in *R v Lee* [1993] 1 WLR 1030 and *R v Leicester Crown Court, Ex parte S (a Minor)* [1993] 1 WLR 1111, both cases involving the discharge of a section 39 order, the Divisional Court had accepted jurisdiction to entertain a judicial review application.

However, none of that line of authorities including *Ex parte M* considered the importance of *R v Central Criminal Court, Ex parte Crook* [The Times November 8, 1984] where the making of an order under section 11 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981 prohibiting the identification of a witness had been held to be within the meaning of section 29(3) of the 1981 Act as intending to influence the conduct of a trial on indictment and that therefore there was no jurisdiction for judicial review.

Rejecting the submission that orders pursuant to section 39 of the 1933 Act were a separate child protection power and not analogous to orders under section 11 of the 1981 Act, his Lordship said that in his view section 39 orders were integral to the administration of justice and not merely collateral to the proceedings so that section 29(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981 deprived the Divisional Court of jurisdiction.

Justice Asill agreed. Solicitors: Ranson, Houghton, Andover; Treasury Solicitor.

Father wins order

Layout unhygienic

In re K (Minor) (Residence order)

Where a mother was untrustworthy and there was a danger that if she was given leave to take her son aged two out of the country, the father would not be allowed to see the child, it was appropriate for the court to refuse her leave to take the child out of the jurisdiction and to order that the child reside with the father and that the mother have contact with the child.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hoffmann and Mr Justice Cazalet) so held on November 26 dismissing the appeal of the child's mother from an order of Judge O'Brien in Cambridge County Court on September 4, 1998 that the child reside with the father and have contact with the mother.

MR JUSTICE CAZALET said the parents were of Asian origin and had one son born in 1996.

For most of 1997 the child had lived in India with the mother's parents, who had refused to admit the father when he visited their house where the child was staying. As a result the father had brought wardship proceedings and the mother had brought the child back to England.

On the mother's application for a residence order and leave to remove the child from the jurisdiction,

the judge had found her "less than candid" and "perfectly capable of telling untruths".

He had found that the father had been endeavouring to see the child but had been prevented by the mother's family. The judge had taken the view that there was a question of trust involved.

It was not open to the court to say that the judge was wrong or had not carried out the balancing exercise properly.

Oakley v Birmingham City Council

Justices were entitled to hold that the layout of premises as they would be used was so unhygienic as to constitute a statutory nuisance under section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Simon Brown and Mr Justice Astill) so held on December 18, dismissing Birmingham City Council's appeal by case

stated from Birmingham Justices who, on April 24, 1998, found the council guilty of failing to abate a statutory nuisance at a council house let to the complainant, John Oakley, at 40 Hunslet Road, Quinton, Birmingham.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said that the only lavatory was located in a compartment too small to contain a wash-hand basin, so that anyone using it was obliged, in order to wash his hands afterwards, either to use the kitchen sink or to pass through the kitchen and use a bathroom on the other side.

Those premises were "in such a state as to be prejudicial to health" under section 79(1)(a) of the 1990 Act on the ground that the risk of cross-infection in the kitchen area was "injurious, or likely to cause injury, to health" within the meaning of section 79(7), and therefore constituted a statutory nuisance.

The court was conscious of the wider implications of the finding, given that the council owned 20,000 similar properties built in 1930, and other authorities faced the same problem with their older housing stock.

But the layout of the premises, as they would predictably be used, was so unhygienic as to create precisely the class of risk of disease or illness to which section 79 was directed.

Address satisfactory

DPP v McCarthy

The purpose of the requirement in section 170(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 that a driver of a vehicle give his name and address was to enable reasonably swift and easy communication between the parties for the purposes of identification and accident negotiations.

Whether the address of a third party satisfied the purpose of the section was a question of fact.

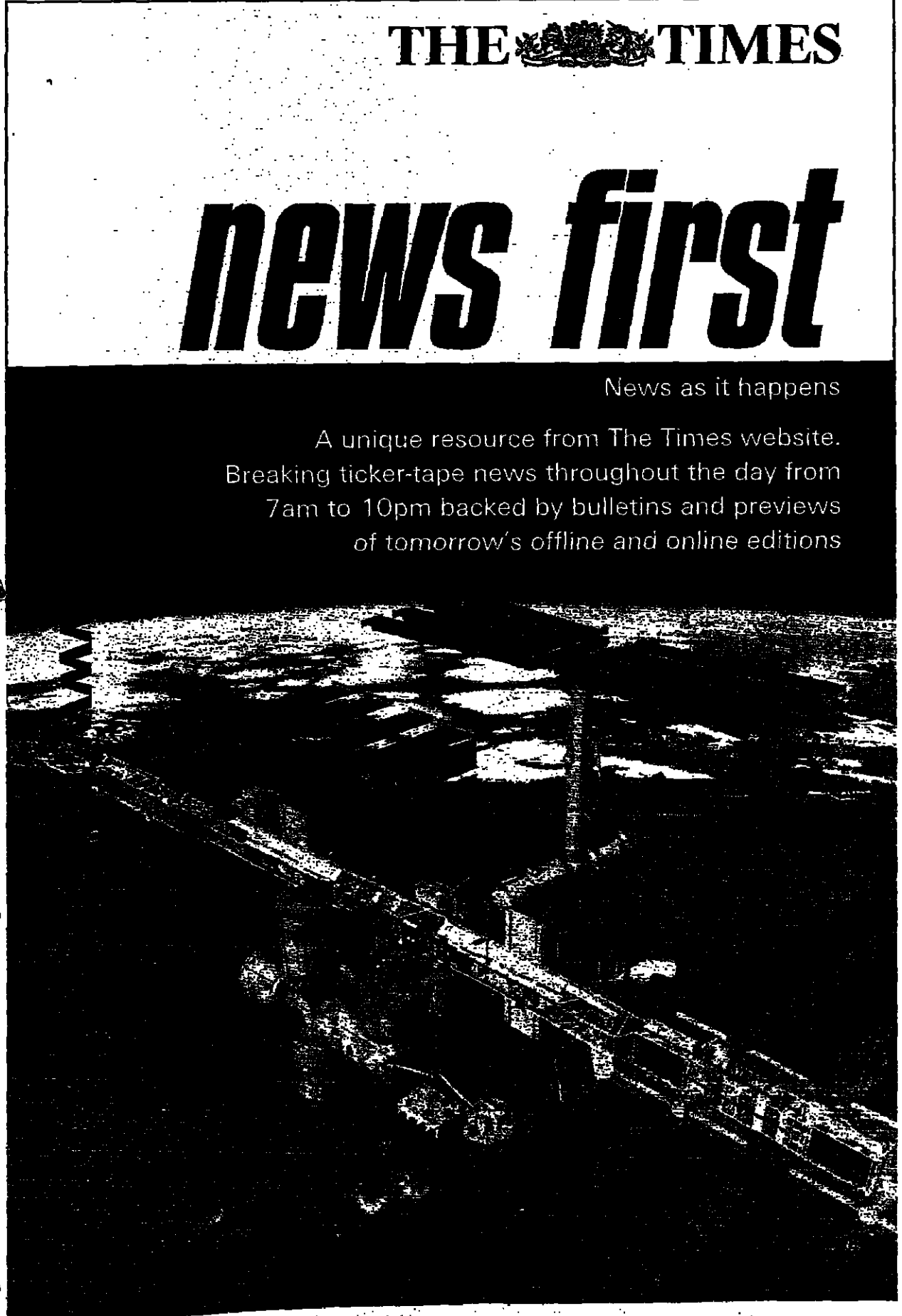
The Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice Simon Brown and Mr Justice Astill) so held on December 14 when dismissing an appeal by the prosecution by way of case stated by Wood Green Crown Court (Judge J. Connor and two justices) on August 25, 1998,

when it allowed the appeal of Kevin McCarthy having found that by providing the address of his solicitors he had satisfied the requirements of section 170(2).

MR JUSTICE ASTILL said that "address" was not defined in the section, no doubt because it was capable of attracting a number of epithets such as "home", "business", "residential" and so on.

An address was where a person could be addressed and the crown court had found, as a question of fact, that the respondent had satisfied the purposes of section 170(2) by giving the address of his solicitors.

His Lordship would not be inclined to change that decision.



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SAILING

MacArthur gains backing for dream

Edward Gorman on a young woman driven by single-minded ambition

In one of the most exciting developments for British sailing in many years, Kingfisher plc, the retail group, confirmed yesterday that it is to sponsor Ellen MacArthur in her attempt to win the Vendée Globe single-handed round-the-world race in 2000.

The announcement, which came on the opening day of the London International Boat Show, follows MacArthur's stunning performance in the Route du Rhum Race from St

fisher and we are delighted to continue our support," he said.

The sponsorship is a huge boost for single-handed sailing in this country and represents the culmination of four years of total dedication by MacArthur to realising her childhood dream of racing single-handed around the world. Yesterday she admitted that she never thought that she could get to this position so quickly.

"To say my career path has been steep would be an understatement — more like a roller coaster with a rocket on it," she said as she waited for the formal announcement at the Boat Show. It was only four years ago that she burst on to the scene after becoming the youngest person to sail single-handed around Great Britain.

'I'm not going just to sail round the world'

Kingfisher, a Europe-wide company with brands in this country including Woolworth, B&Q, Superdrug and Comet, came in at the last minute to pay for the charter of *Aqua Quorum* but had always intended the Route du Rhum as a test to see whether a full Vendée sponsorship was worthwhile.

The company has now made up its mind to go ahead and is backing the determined 22-year-old from the tiny hamlet of Whaistandwell in Derbyshire with a budget of more than £1.5 million. This is enough to pay for the building and design of a new Open 60 yacht plus all the race training and preparation that MacArthur will require in the run-up to the start of the Vendée in November 2000.

Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, the chief executive of Kingfisher and a keen yachtsman, said that the choice of his company's first sports sponsorship reflected its belief in backing young people with the ambition to succeed. "Ellen has already demonstrated, through her professionalism, courage and commitment, that she is an ideal ambassador for King-

fisher and we are delighted to continue our support," he said. For that feat, in a little cruiser named *Iduna*, MacArthur was awarded the BT Young Sailor of the Year award. She then beat a path to the racing heart of England in Hamble, Hampshire, where she set herself up in a Portakabin and ruthlessly set about hunting down sponsors to enable her to complete her first single-handed ocean race, the Mini-Transat, in which she finished a commendable seventeenth out of 52.

That was followed by a two-handed Round Britain Race last summer before she set off on the Route du Rhum. Like many, MacArthur has been fired by the dream of achieving great things in sailing, but what sets her apart is her practical determination, her appetite to absorb new concepts and ideas and her technical ability.

Few who have worked with her doubt that she will become a formidable opponent in the tough world of single-handed ocean racing, especially now that she has serious money behind her.

Yesterday she committed herself to winning the Vendée,



MacArthur can look forward to taking on the best in the world in the Vendée Globe

which is likely to see a star-studded field of mainly French skippers, but may also include Mike Golding of Britain. "My aim is to be in the top three, but I want to win," she said. "I'm not going out there just to sail round the world."

Over the next 18 months, MacArthur will devote time to race training in dinghies, one-designs and even match-rac-

ing to hone her tactical skills. She may sail in the two-handed Route du Rhum later this year and possibly take part in the Round Britain Race. Ashore, she is planning to spend as much time as possible learning about weather routing. "I want to learn the weather inside out and back to front," she said.

Mark Turner, her project

manager, said that the design tender for the new boat was being issued immediately. Although Groupe Finot, the French naval architects, are favourites to win the contract for the new *Kingfisher*, Turner made it clear that he was not ruling out any designer at this stage.

Times Challenge, page 13

MOTOR RACING

Stewart wary of changes driven by sponsors

By KEVIN EASON

ONE of the most influential voices in Formula One gave warning yesterday that the sport could be overshadowed by commercialism and millions of spectators could be confused if British American Racing (BAR) succeeds in its attempt to run two cars in different liveries this season.

Jackie Stewart, three times a world champion and now chairman of the Stewart-Ford team, stepped into the simmering row between BAR and the FIA, the sport's governing body. A decision on whether BAR, new to Formula One this year, will be allowed to field two cars under the totally different colours of the Lucky Strike and 555 cigarette brands of British American Tobacco, the team's £100 million sponsor, is now expected next week from an arbitration panel.

Stewart is convinced that the end of the tradition of teams having identical cars would make it difficult for spectators to identify teams and that it would damage the reputation of the sport.

Launching his new Stewart-Ford car at the Autosport International show in Birmingham, he said: "This has tremendous ramifications for Formula One. When we entered Formula One, it was clearly stated that our livery would have to be consistent on both cars."

"But if BAR wins, the prospects of the cigarette-sponsored teams trying to maximise their exposure is very great. Perhaps we might even have two Ferraris in different colours. There could be a commercial advantage if, for in-

stance, Kellogg's came into Formula One and branded one Rice Krispies and the other All Bran — at least we know which one would be fastest. It would allow companies to split their costs."

However, Stewart also pointed to the first grand prix of last season in Australia, in which David Coulthard moved aside to allow his McLaren team-mate to win. If both cars had been in different liveries in that race, the sport would be open to accusations of favouring one brand over another for purely commercial reasons.

The impetus for the BAR challenge comes from cigarette companies desperate

to get maximum attention in the period before the European Union implements a ban on tobacco sponsorship and advertising.

The Stewart team draws much of its backing from the Ford Motor Company. However, Ford does not see any advantage in branding its Formula One cars differently. Martin Whitaker, its director of European motorsport, said: "I don't think it would serve any purpose except to confuse everybody totally."

Ford's sponsorship has allowed Stewart to reorganise the team this year, bringing in Gary Anderson as technical director from Jordan and expanding the workforce to more than 250 at a new factory in Milton Keynes.

Answers from page 46

CATBAND

(b) A bar or iron for securing a door. A chain drawn across a street for defence. The exact sense is doubtful. "To make preparations for defence, to big up their own back gates, closes, and ports, have their catbands in readiness."

CREBROUS

(a) Frequent. From the Latin crebrum frequent. "The crebrous fame of your clemency."

CULLION

(c) A tessie. Origin obscure, but with cognates in most Romance languages. Probably connected with the Greek kolos a sheath. Caxton, *Reynard*, 1481: "His right cullion or balock stone."

CATAPHRYGIAN

(b) One of a heretical sect in the second century who followed the errors of Montanus. A Montanist. So called because they originated in Phrygia. "The Cataphrygians who held that Christ not in body but in soul ascended into Heaven."

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

After 1...Kh7 2Rh5 is checkmate

TELEVISION CHOICE

Rallying for the cause

Country House

BBC2, 7.30pm

This 12-part series on Woburn Abbey will be pigeon-holed as yet another documentary soap and given its large cast of characters and running stories the label cannot be denied. Yet we seem to be in a different genre from wheel clampers and learner drivers. The material is more sedate and the treatment less brash, which is not to say that the show feels the need to defer to its aristocratic world. The main plot tonight is that Lady Tavistock, the current mistress of Woburn, agrees to open the estate for a stage of the RAC car rally and soon regrets it. Three cars end up in the deer pond and the surge of visitors causes the deer herd to stampede. Never again, says Lady T. But Woburn costs a fortune to maintain and if noisy and boring cars (her description) bring in money, she may have to rethink.

Garden Stories

BBC2, 8.30pm

This isn't being the best time of year for handy horticultural tips. BBC2 fills its Friday night gardening slot with a series which eschews advice and celebrates passion. Programme one is about gardening couples, of which there are many variations. The idea of partners in life also being partners in the garden, takes a bit of a knock. Admittedly we meet Lesley and Steve, who are both obsessive gardeners and declare that the activity is central to a relationship which has lasted more than 30 years. Hazel and Derek can do better than that, having been married 41 years, but he does everything in the garden and she does nothing and they prefer it that way. David and Betty both enjoy gardening but have such different views about it that they have divided their garden in two. This gives them half an acre each in which to do whatever they like.

Gimme Gimme Gimme

BBC2, 9.00pm

Here is yet another comedy about flat sharers but give the writer, Jonathan Harvey, the credit for giving a family farce a twist. Linda and Toni may live together but they are definitely not a couple, for she fancies men (preferably Liam Gallagher) and so does he (ditto Simon Shepherd).



Michael Parkinson returns with a new series of talk shows (BBC1, 10pm)

Linda, aggressive and foul-mouthed, is played by Kathy Burke in an orange wig and white-framed specs. Much of her dialogue could have come straight off a lavatory wall. Tom bears a close resemblance to PC Goodie, the camp cop of Ben Elton's *The Thin Blue Line*, which is unsurprising as both are played by James Dreyfus. The gay straight joke is squeezed for all it is worth in tonight's opener in which the pair wake up after a drunken night out to find a naked man in the flat. Both, in their different ways, dream of conquest.

Parkinson

BBC1, 9.30pm

If you cannot find a new show an old one may do as the BBC discovered when it resurrected Parkinson last year after a gap of goodness knows how long. The series had hardly got into its stride before the audience figures demanded it should be axed and now Parkinson is back for another run. The appeal of Parkinson is that the guests matter, not the host, a reversal of Clive Anderson's shows which are a vehicle for him. The guests tonight include Geri Halliwell, who has much to talk about, having since her departure from the Spice Girls become a United Nations goodwill ambassador, campaigned for breast cancer awareness and sung *Happy Birthday* to the Prince of Wales. Dawn French and Carol Vorderman complete the line-up. Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

A Very British Story

Radio 2, 7.00pm

Sixty years in the life of any film industry is a mighty span of time and, ordinarily, it would be ludicrous for radio to attempt to tell the story in no more than four 30-minute programmes. Nevertheless, Michael Freedland has compiled, and presents, *A Very British Story*. Wisely I think, he has put a personal stamp on his history of British cinema over the past six decades. It is the industry as he sees it. What to leave in? What to leave out? I have not heard tonight's opening episode, but I know that it includes snapshots of the best-known of our studios (Pinewood, Ealing etc) as well as interviews with some of the film-makers we usually associate with them (Bryan Forbes, Peter Rogers etc).

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Kevin Greasing 3.00am Rock Radio 4.00 Chris Moyles 6.00 Pete Tong's Essential Selection 8.00 Judge Jules 11.00 Westwood Radio 1 Rap Show 2.00am Fabio and Grooverider 4.00 Emma B

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 9.30 Ken Bruce 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 6.00 Des Lynam 7.00 A Very British Story. Michael Freedland presents a four-part personal exploration of the British film industry. See Choice (1/4) 7.30 Friday Night is Music Night 8.15 Wuthering Heights (7/7) 9.30 Listen to the Band 10.00 David Jacobs 10.30 Focus On: Fabio (8/6 only) News in German 7.00pm Radio Summary 7.01pm 7.25pm Focus On: For Thought 7.30pm Multitask Alternative 8.00 News (8/6 only) News in German 8.05pm 8.15pm News in German 8.15pm World Business Report 8.15pm Early Versions 9.30pm Speaking of English 9.45pm Sports Round-Up 10.00pm Newsdesk 10.30pm Assignment 11.00pm Newsdesk 11.30pm Focus On: Fabio 12.00pm News 12.05pm World Business Report 12.15pm Britain Today 12.30pm Wild Tales 12.45pm Sports Round-Up 1.00pm Newshour 2.00pm News 2.05pm Outlook 2.30pm Multitask Alternative 3.00pm News (8/6 only) News in German 3.05pm 3.15pm News in German 3.15pm World Business Report 3.15pm Sports Round-Up 3.30pm Newsdesk 8.30pm Focus On: Fabio (8/6 only) News in German 7.00pm Radio Summary 7.01pm 7.25pm Focus On: For Thought 7.30pm Multitask Alternative 8.00pm News 8.05pm World Business Report 8.15pm Britain Today 8.30pm People and Politics 10.00pm Newsdesk 10.30pm Assignment 10.45pm Sports Round-Up 11.00pm News 11.05pm Outlook 11.30pm Multitask Alternative 12.00pm Newsdesk 12.30pm From the Weeklies 12.45pm Britain Today 1.00pm Newsdesk 1.30pm Small Worlds 1.45pm Short Story 2.00pm Newsdesk 2.30pm People and Politics 2.00pm News 2.05pm World Business Report 3.15pm Sports Round-Up 3.30pm Science in Action 4.00pm Newsdesk 4.30pm Weekend

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

6.00am Morning Reports 6.00pm Breakfast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 9.00pm Nicky Campbell 12.00pm The Midday News with Anna Webster 1.30pm Race and Go 4.00pm Drive with Peter Allen and Jane Garvey 7.00pm News Extra with Susan Bookbinder 7.30pm Alan Green's Sportnight. Alan Green and studio guests debate the week's sporting action. Plus, live commentary on Transmover's Volkswagen Wunders 10.00pm Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30am Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00pm Bobby Hat 7.00pm Wheels of Steel 11.00pm James Meritt 2.00am Richard Allen

TALK RADIO

6.00am Ben Onoratini & Sally Meen 9.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00pm Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Anna Rieburn 4.00pm Peter Dinkley 5.00pm The Sports Zone 9.00pm Mike Allen 2.00am Mike Dickinson

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air Stephanie Hughes with music and arts news, including a review of the film *Little Voice* 9.00am Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Mozart (Piano Sonata in C, K545), Beethoven (Piano Sonata in E-flat, Op. 10, No. 3), Schubert (Symphony No. 9 in D minor, 'The Great') 10.30am Artist of the Week: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau 11.00am Sound Stories. Gustav Klimt 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Prokofiev 1.00pm Lunchtime Concert. Hakan Hardenberger, trumpet, Simon Preston, organ, Bach (Prelude and Fugue in E-flat, BWV565), Elton John (Celine Dion), Taksim (Piano), in Memoriam Witold Lutoslawski, Halim (Trumpet Sonata) 2.00pm The BBC Concerts. Ulster Orchestra under Jurij Hickman, Tatu Yussuf and Adrian Leaper, Barry Douglas, piano. Wolf (Italian Serenade), Haydn (Symphony No. 99 in E-flat), Mozart (Piano Concerto No. 25 in G major, K467), Brahms (Serenade No. 1 in D) 4.00pm Music Restored (1) 4.45pm Music Machine with Tommy Pearson 6.00pm In Tune with Peter Dinkley 7.30pm Performance on 3 Ulster Orchestra under Robert Holliman, Raphael Wallfisch, cello. Part II of Bach (Hedberg a Beekeeper), Paganini Vasks (Cantabile for strings), Maxwell Davies (Cello Concerto), Stravinsky Concerto No. 2, Kevin O'Connell (North), BBC commission; first broadcast; Schoenberg (Chamber Symphony No. 2) 9.10pm Postscript: Fidelity — All At Sea by Pippa Gladhill (5/5) (1) 9.30pm Quizzes. Flute Sonatas Rachel Brown, flute, James Johnston, harpsichord, Mark Caudle, cello 10.00pm Hear and Now. Very Strange. Inve Ardit about a recently released CD of chamber music by Elliott Carter 11.30pm Contemporary. Russell Davies presents a 52-part history of jazz (1) 12.00pm BBC Symphony Orchestra. A programme of music by Martinu recorded at the Maida Vale studios last year, prior to the BBC Symphony Orchestra's Baroque weekend. Conductor: Jiri Belohlavek 1.00am Through the Night with Donald Macleod. 1.00am Martinu Carlo (The Piano Trio, Up Light, Violin, Verdi (Overture), Scilla (Piano), Beethoven (Violin Concerto in D), Borodin (Symphony No. 2 in B minor), 2.55pm Schubert (String Quartet in D minor, D810, Death and the Maiden), 4.05pm Strauss (Burleske in D minor), 5.25pm Crussel (Sinfonia concertante in B flat)

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 6.30am Shipping Forecast 6.45am Prayer for the Day 6.57am Farming Today Rural Issues with Christine Smith 6.00am Today introduced by Sue MacGregor and Writtle Robinson 9.00am Desert Island Discs Dave Brubeck (1) 9.45am (FM) Swire: The Vanished World (5/5) 9.45am (LW) An Act of Worship 10.00am Woman's Hour with Jenni Murray 11.00am Book of the Week. Jonathan Smith along as Eric Newby revisits Fontenay in Italy (1) 11.30am The Oldest Member: Chester Forgets Himself by P.G. Wodehouse. Maurice Denham stars as John 12.00pm (FM) News 12.04pm You and Yours Liz Barclay and John Walsby tackle consumer concerns 12.00pm (LW) News Headlines, Shipping Forecast 1.00pm The World at One with Nick Clarke 1.30pm Sport. Test Brian Stiles chairs the test semi-final of the All Stars, from the Cambridge Arts Cinema 2.00pm The Archers Another chance to hear yesterday's edition (1) 2.15pm Amazon Play. Jerusalem North West by Vanessa Rossini. A Jewish convert recalls a man she once fell in love with. Starring Sarah Lancashire, David Pinner and Brigit Forsyth (1) 3.00pm Looked On News series. Five programmes in which Quentin Cooper and guests give advice on buying a computer (1/5) 3.30pm The Melting Pot Tom Jones samples the fare at a 400-year-old Slovenian inn 3.45pm The Secreted Isle Anna Massey narrates the history of Britain, drawing on the words of Winston Churchill, as read by Paul Eddington. Goodwin and Edward the Conqueror (1) 4.00pm Bookclub. The American author Jane Smiley discusses *A Thousand Acres*, her novel based on the King Lear story, with James Naughtie (1)

4.30pm The Message. Alex Brodie and his guests discuss current media trends 5.00pm PM in English 6.00pm 5p O'Clock News 6.30pm The Ghost of Number Ten New series. Political satire by Steve Nallon and Taran All, about a new Labour Prime Minister whose life is made a misery by the ghost of a murdered Victorian prostitute with strong socialist convictions. Maggie Stead and Mark Williams star. See Choice (1/6) 7.00pm The Archers Pat becomes the hard of the hour 7.15pm Front Row. Stock reviews new paperback 7.45pm Under One Roof The last of three stories by Michael Horson (1) 8.00pm Any Questions Jonathan Dimbleby is joined in Staffordshire, by guests including the Shadow Social Security Secretary Iain Duncan Smith 8.45pm Letter from America Alastair Cooke with another slice of life stories 9.00pm The Friday Play: The Year of the Tiger by Tina Papper. A man undertaking an unusual assignment in Bangladesh is entangled by the forces he finds there. Starring Paul Jessel and Emily Joyce 10.00pm The World Tonight 10.45pm Book at Bedtime: Mann Part Five of Erich Zola's novel about the Parisian demi-monde, read by Juliet Stevenson 11.00pm Late Night on 4: Late Tackle Sporting conversation 11.30pm Sporting Philanthropists Profile of the multi-millionaire property developer John Bewell, who has launched PE teaching in primary schools for the past four years (2/3) 12.00am News 12.30am The Late Book: The Rebirth of Beasts Gavin Mac reads the final part of Margaret Atwood's story 12.45am Shipping Forecast 1.00am As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1, FM 97.8-98.8, RADIO 2, FM 88.0-90.2, RADIO 3, FM 90.8-92.4, RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.6, LW 198; MW 720, RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 885, 908, WORLD SERVICE, MW 645, LW 108 (12.45-5.55am), CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.6, MW 1197, 1215, TALK RADIO, MW 1058, 1082. Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McManis.

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So when did your wife stop beating you?

The flyer that fluttered out of our bundle of daily papers yesterday morning yelled: "Scared to go home to your wife tonight?" Evidently Channel 4's marketing wizards felt they were onto something juicy with last night's *Dispatches* on battered men and went for the hard sell.

This approach puts the series at one end of a spectrum which runs through *Neighbours* (whoever) from *Hell*, past the bawling barge balloons of *The Jerry Springer Show* to the grotesque theatre of American wrestling. This is a shame, because there is much more to this serious, well-intentioned series than gasping at emotional incoherence.

But you can feel the boys in suits with the ratings print-outs beating down their necks all the way through the programme. The conventions of "X-wishes-to-remain-anonymous" documentaries have always teetered on the

ludicrous. The 1960s pioneers *Man Alive* made heavy use of silhouetted figures, mumbling their shame in bare studios. (This was nicely satirised by Monty Python in an exposé of men whose secret vice was to dress up as mice and attend illegal cheese parties.)

Last night's speciality was a thin strip of light across the eyes, which was particularly dramatic when the poor fellows started to cry. Except that a nasty little Sergeant Major in the back of my brain kept shouting "Full yourself together, you big girls' blouses!" (This reaction, presumably, is precisely why some of the witnesses wished to remain anonymous.) All the other ingredients were there, including the plangent piano music and the tone of hushed gravity from reporter Deborah Davies.

A more serious fault is the front-loading of the programme, so that far more time is spent on the fun part, describing and detailing the

abuse, than making much serious attempt at analysis or explanation. Let alone discussing possible solutions. The line between earnest social concern and voyeuristic sensationalism is a very fine one, which the series seems increasingly willing to cross.

But then the *Dispatches* team does have a knack of unearthing disturbing and often unexpected social problems and we should be grateful that anybody is giving them an airing at all. The programme was inspired by the arrival of a "flood" of letters from men, following devastating documentaries last autumn on violence against women.

Strategic advertising for victims produced 140 responses, of which about 100 were deemed to be valid. These respondents were sent questionnaires, which produced some horrific evidence: testicle-stamping, knife-attacks and an



Paul Hoggart

attempted smothering. Many assaults occurred while the man was sleeping, including slapping an ankle with a hammer, pouring bleach on genitalia and jabbing a hair-grip down an ear.

Two women batterers were interviewed. One was very remorseful. The other not particularly so. Neither could really explain why they did it. There were issues of jealousy, frustration and an

overwhelming need to control, all echoes male violence against women. A correlation was suggested with experiences of violence in earlier life. If men didn't fight back, that seemed to make it worse. Intriguing issues, but that's another programme, which I don't suppose will be made.

No doubt some would claim that big, strapping men, including a serving police officer, getting bashed by their wives and girlfriends is an example of the top-down world created by women's liberation. Except that, as the programme repeatedly reminds us, these hair-ripping crotch-kickers are less than a tenth as numerous as their male counterparts.

And I expect they were at it in Saxon times, when men were men and children died young. The archaeological series *Meet The Ancestors* (BBC2) returned with a splendid new find to interpret: the well-preserved skeletons of

Anglo-Saxon warrior and his horse, surrounded by the graves of small children.

Once spent a weekend or two with Regia Anglorum, the re-enactment group which specialises in Saxon and Viking warriors. They greet these discoveries with a mixture of excitement and trepidation, in case the skeleton shows they have been holding their spears the wrong way.

Fortunately the body under the former baseball field at the USAF base at Lakenheath simply showed how they used to attach their horses' bridles. X-rays also indicated how the sword was made. This involved spiral twists of iron and 79 different strips of iron. It was beautiful and impressive.

The poor horse buried with his master was probably lame from arthritis in a rear ankle and had a depressed fracture of the skull from a pole-axe blow or some such. I

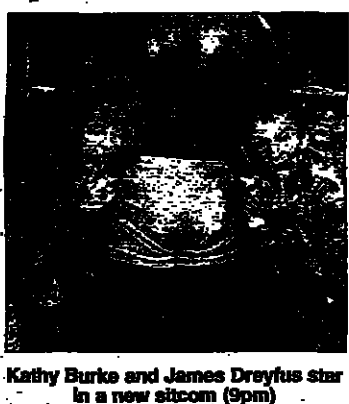
expect the warrior's wife did that when the horse was asleep. They were buried surrounded by the graves of children, which presenter Julian Richards found touching, an indication that he was protecting them in death as in life. This naive assumption a *Dispatches* investigation would soon dispel.

"Knock, knock, knock" go the Customs officers before bursting into action. "Who's there?" we reply. "Ivan!" "Ivan who?" "Ivan Improbable!" The Knock (ITV) returned for a new series with a breathless yarn involving hit-men, revenge assassinations and plutonium smuggling from Russia to South Africa via London. The series belongs to a tradition of British television drama trying to be an action adventure film (remember *The Professionals*?) and looking faintly ludicrous. I look forward to a series on the Inland Revenue's crack Outstanding Tax Assessment Recovery Squad.

BBC1	
5.40am <i>Business of Islam</i> (1) (1) (3324038)	
6.00 <i>Footage from Footage</i> (70752)	
7.00 <i>Broadcast News</i> (1) (49778)	
9.00 <i>Kilroy</i> (1) (8807205)	
9.45 <i>The Vanessa Show</i> (1) (5270175)	
10.55 <i>News; Regional News; Weather</i> (1) (7146089)	
11.00 <i>Real Rooms</i> (7156446)	
11.25 <i>Can't Cook, Won't Cook</i> (1) (7126205)	
11.55 <i>News; Regional News; Weather</i> (1) (115501)	
12.00 <i>Call My Bluff</i> (87040)	
12.30 <i>Battersea Dogs' Home</i> (1) (12224)	
1.00 <i>One O'Clock News; Weather</i> (1) (42898)	
1.30 <i>Regional News; Weather</i> (86830205)	
1.40 <i>Neighbours Midge and Harold offer Lou an olive branch</i> (1) (65510021)	
2.05 <i>Ironside</i> An idealistic youngster is snatched by a radical group bargaining for the release of one of their members. With Raymond Burr (1) (7803596)	
2.55 <i>Going for a Song</i> (788750)	
3.20 <i>The Weather Show</i> (1) (2128601)	
3.25 <i>Children's BBC: Playdays</i> (8924250)	
3.35 <i>Spider</i> (2414601) 3.50 <i>Smart on the Road</i> (86553) 4.05 <i>Playdays</i> (7879393)	
4.30 <i>L & K Friday</i> (863896) 4.55 <i>Newsround Extra</i> (1257311) 5.10 <i>Blue Peter</i> (6732021)	
5.35 <i>Neighbours</i> (1) (1) (619044)	
6.00 <i>5 O'Clock News; Weather</i> (1) (359)	
6.30 <i>Regional News Magazine</i> (311)	
7.00 <i>Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook</i> New series. <i>EastEnders'</i> Sid Owen and Richard Driscoll, better known as Ricky Butcher and Tony Alex join chefs Ross Burden and Victor Tobin (1) (7408)	
7.30 <i>Top of the Pops</i> The week's chart-toppers, featuring the UK's number one single (1) (585)	
8.00 <i>Vets in Practice</i> Joe tags a tricky operation to amputate a fawn's leg, while Emma has an ethical dilemma over a much-loved family cat. 8/10 (1) (6158)	
8.30 <i>A Question of Sport</i> Quiz, presented by Sue Barker (1) (5893)	
9.00 <i>Five O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather</i> (1) (3427)	
9.30 <i>Richard Parkinson</i> New series of celebrity interview, starting with the former <i>Star Girl</i> Gail O'Grady, comedian Dawn French and the ubiquitous television presenter Carol Vorderman (1) (502408)	
10.25 <i>Bird on a Wire</i> (80040) Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn star in this frantic comedy chase thriller as ex-lovers relentlessly pursued by the police, FBI and a team of ruthless assassins. Inspired by John Buchan (1) (792269)	FLM
11.10 <i>The Stand-Up Show</i> With rising star Dan Antopolski (5123557)	
12.40 <i>The Big End</i> New series. Simon Mayo takes a look at some bizarre beliefs in pre-millennial Britain (1) (6159847)	
1.10 <i>The Beast in the Cellar</i> (1970) A series of murders are committed in Lancashire, prompting rumours of a strange beast lurking in the local woods. Thriller, starring Flora Robson and Beryl Field. Directed by James Kelly (1) (2966373)	FLM
2.30 <i>Weather</i> (4970625)	
2.55 <i>BBC News</i> (241508083)	

HTV	CENTRAL
5.30am <i>ITN Morning News</i> (53934) 6.00 <i>GMTV</i> (822330) 9.25 <i>Trials</i> (1) (264156) 10.25 <i>This Morning</i> (1) (62792175) 12.15pm <i>ITN News and Weather</i> (1) (5697779) 12.20 <i>ITN Lunchtime News: Weather</i> (1) (3232) 12.58 <i>ITN Crimestoppers</i> (5548586) 1.00 <i>Shortland Street</i> : Ruth returns with a vengeance (37934) 1.30 <i>Home and Away</i> : Tegan gives Joey an ultimatum (1) (43773) 2.00 <i>The Jerry Springer Show</i> (1) (203785) 2.45 <i>Dale's Supermarket Sweep</i> (1) (21108) 3.15 <i>ITN News Headlines</i> (1) (2124156) 3.20 <i>ITN News</i> (1) (2121069) 3.25 <i>CITV: Mopatop's Shop</i> (2104392) 3.35 <i>Timbuctoo</i> (921085) 3.40 <i>Animal Stories</i> (921085) 3.50 <i>Adam's Family Tree</i> (921085) 4.20 <i>Gladstones: Train 2</i> (921085) 4.50 <i>Top Ten of Everything</i> (921085) 5.10 <i>A Country Practice</i> : A neighbourly dispute ends in tragedy (7856458) 5.40 <i>ITN Early Evening News</i> (1) (424021) 6.00 <i>Home and Away</i> : Tegan gives Joey an ultimatum (1) (1) (78908) 6.25 <i>ITV Weather</i> (57804) 6.30 <i>The West Tonight</i> (1) (779) 7.00 <i>Brue's Price is Right</i> (1) (2576) 7.30 <i>Coronation Street</i> : Tegan has Lee over a barrel (1) (663) 8.00 <i>Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?</i> : Big-price game show (1) (1224) 8.30 <i>Neighbours from Hell</i> (1) (7589)	As HTV West except: 12.20-12.30pm <i>Central News</i> (6113427) 1.00 <i>What You Were Here?</i> (37934) 1.30 <i>The Jerry Springer Show</i> (1) (203785) 2.15-2.45 <i>Home and Away</i> (21217) 3.20-3.25 <i>Central News</i> (756458) 5.10-5.40 <i>Shortland Street</i> (37934) 6.25-7.00 <i>Central News: Weather</i> (62843) 10.30-10.40 <i>Central News: Weather</i> (62843) 1.30 <i>Tales from the Crypt</i> (23243) 12.00am <i>Short Story Cinema</i> (1657002) 12.40 <i>FLM: Revolver</i> (78002) 2.15 <i>Box Office America</i> (193441) 2.40 <i>SeaQuest</i> (6050793) 3.35 <i>The Haunted Fishbowl</i> (1425625) 4.05 <i>Central Jobfinder</i> '99 (8156638) 5.20-5.30 <i>Asian Eye</i> (4440793)

CHANNEL 4	CHANNEL 5
6.00am <i>Sesame Street</i> (53682) 7.00 <i>WideWorld of Sports</i> (55717) 9.00 <i>The Cosby Show</i> (1) (1) (616283) 9.35 <i>I Can Get It for You Wholesale</i> (1951) 11.00 <i>Roots to Success</i> (6623243) 11.25 <i>Collectors' Lot</i> (7794717) 11.30 <i>Here's One I Made Earlier</i> (1) (7530) 12.00pm <i>Sesame Street</i> (70750) 12.30 <i>Bewitched</i> (1) (93214) 1.00 <i>Pet Rescue</i> : The RSPCA (1) (1) (35576) 1.30 <i>Earthquake</i> : The antiser (1) (7507750) 1.55 <i>The Wrong Man</i> (1957) A family man is accused of being a notorious armed robber. Fact-based (1) (2036655) 3.30 <i>Hampton Court Palace</i> : Assistant curator Jonathan Foyle questions the long-held belief that Henry VIII built the Great Hall's oriel window (1) (885) 4.00 <i>Fifteen-to-One Highlights</i> (1) (1) (392) 4.30 <i>Countdown</i> (1) (1856576) 4.55 <i>Ricki Lake Gay couples</i> (1) (4967934) 5.30 <i>Pet Rescue Roadshow</i> : An injured fox is treated (1) (158) 6.00 <i>TFI Friday</i> : With Kathy Burke, Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer (13953) 7.00 <i>Channel 4 News: Weather</i> (1) (466897) 7.55 <i>Cuban Faces</i> : Jorge visits his god-daughter. Last in series (5/5) (1) (941069) 8.00 <i>The Lost Gardens of Heligan</i> : The restoration of the famous Cornish gardens (1/6) (1) (9866) 8.30 <i>Brookside</i> : Niamh is devastated by Sinbad's decision (1) (1601) 9.00 <i>Fridays</i> : Chandler gets trapped in a bank's cashpoint lobby together with a stunning model (1) (1) (6137) 9.30 <i>Streetmate</i> : Davina McCall visits Dublin and Greenwich to match-make single people (1) (25798) 10.00 <i>Fraser</i> : New series. Fraser experiences a wide range of emotions as he struggles to cope with unemployment (1) (88779) 10.30 <i>Enoch</i> : Unconventional beauty goddess (1) (89243) 11.40 <i>Ring of the Hill</i> : New series. Has Hank survived the gas explosion? (1) (97971)	6.00am <i>5 News and Sport</i> (7035855) 7.00 <i>WideWorld of Sports</i> : The life and work of Charles Darwin (1) (1) (913008) 7.30 <i>Millikens</i> (6746361) 7.35 <i>Winkles' House</i> (1) (984601) 8.00 <i>Havakazoo</i> (1) (1294392) 8.30 <i>Dappledawn Farm</i> (1293633) 9.00 <i>Floyd Unhooked</i> (1) (1294392) 9.25 <i>Russell Grant</i> (1) (4823330) 9.30 <i>The Oprah Winfrey Show</i> (6553137) 10.20 <i>Sunset Beach</i> : Ben rescues Maria (1) (2251885) 11.10 <i>Lezza</i> (1) (2131311) 12.00pm <i>5 News at Noon</i> (1) (1204779) 12.30 <i>Familia</i> : Chris makes a stunning announcement (1) (1) (9070408) 1.00 <i>The Bold and the Beautiful</i> : Meggie's actions disgust James (1) (1) (919555) 1.30 <i>The Roseanne Show</i> : The comedienne chases to rescue Kristie Alley (1079779) 2.00 <i>100 Per Cent Gold</i> (5400779) 2.30 <i>Good Afternoon</i> : Daily entertainment, featuring dramatic tales in Liverpool Mums and antiques expert Eric Knowles. 5 News Update (482243) 3.30 <i>Can You Feel Me Dancing?</i> (1986) 4.00 <i>Moving Drama</i> : About a young blind woman's attempts to gain independence from her over-protective father (796934) 5.20 <i>Sunset Beach</i> (1) (1) (215563) 6.30 <i>Familia</i> : Chris makes a stunning announcement (1) (1) (9070408) 7.00 <i>5 News: Weather</i> (1) (494555) 7.30 <i>Champions of the Wild</i> : Profile of koea lover Steve Phillips (1) (531224) 8.00 <i>Was it Good for You?</i> Travel with Alisa Greenhalgh (1/14) (640343)



Kathy Burke and James Dreyfus star in a new sitcom (9pm)



Simon Shepherd and Carl Norris in a new three-part period drama (9pm)



Hank and the boys return for a new series (11.00pm)



Fly-on-the-caravan-well. Park boss Colin Saunders and family (8.30pm)

VIDEO PLUS+ and VIDEO PLUS+ codes
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9.00 *Glimme Glimme* New sitcom focusing on the friendship between an unglamorous receptionist and a gay actor both in hot pursuit of their perfect man. Kathy Burke and James Dreyfus star (1) (1005)
9.30 *Bring Back the 1960s* Musical comedy featuring a spoof musical performance by leading Labour politicians (1) (23330)
10.00 *The Young Ones* The guys strike off (1) (88311)
10.30 *Newsnight* Kirsty Wark and guests, live from the Millennium Dome (1) (90586)
11.18 *Suspended in Time* (1) (45514)
11.20 *Young Guns* Go for it! Profile of Eighties pop group the Human League (1) (97768)
11.50 *Darts: World Professional Championship* Highlights of this evening's quarter-finals (943446)
12.30am *Weather* (1385575)
12.35 *Mo Better Blues* (1990) Denzel Washington stars in Spike Lee's vibrant portrait of a self-centred jazz trumpeter (1) (4640463)

9.00 *Tilly Trotter* New three-part Catherine Corcoran period melodrama, starring Carl Norris as a 19-year-old village lass whose life is turned upside down by her sweetheart's marriage to someone else. With Simon Shepherd, Gavin Abbott and Jack Goddard (1/4) (1) (3779)
10.00 *News at Ten* (1) (80137)
10.30 *ITV News and Weather* (1) (678243)
10.40 *Friday Night's All Right* With Hale and Pace (1) (161872)
11.30 *Slipstream* (1998) Futuristic adventure, starring Mark Hamill as a cop chasing a runaway and with Bob Peck, Bill Paxton and Robbie Coltrane. Directed by Steven Lisberger (1) (6204972)
1.35 *Short Story Cinema: Beware of the Dog* Psychological thriller about a yuppie couple trapped in the home of a mentally disturbed recluse (835018)
2.05 *The Haunted Fishbowl* TV review (8850644)
2.40 *Baywatch* An eccentric dies, leaving CJ Whitman in his will (1) (1) (8008441)
3.30 *The Shivers* (1) (1) (9363793)
4.25 *Sawtooth* (9061287)
4.40 *ITV Nightscreen* (3476287)
5.00 *Coronation Street* (1) (1) (31712)

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For further listings see Saturday's Vision
SKY ONE
7.00am *Count Down* (9137) 7.20 *The Chris Evans Breakfast Show* (46428) 8.30 *Hollywood Squares* (25224) 9.00 *Sally Jessy Raphael* (5531) 9.30 *The Chris Evans Breakfast Show* (46428) 10.00 *Count Down* (9137) 10.30 *Count Down* (9137) 11.00 *Count Down* (9137) 11.30 *Count Down* (9137) 12.00 *Count Down* (9137) 12.30 *Count Down* (9137) 1.00 *Count Down* (9137) 1.30 *Count Down* (9137) 2.00 *Count Down* (9137) 2.30 *Count Down* (9137) 3.00 *Count Down* (9137) 3.30 *Count Down* (9137) 4.00 *Count Down* (9137) 4.30 *Count Down* (9137) 5.00 *Count Down* (9137) 5.30 *Count Down* (9137) 6.00 *Count Down* (9137) 6.30 *Count Down* (9137) 7.00 *Count Down* (9137) 7.30 *Count Down* (9137) 8.00 *Count Down* (9137) 8.30 *Count Down* (9137) 9.00 *Count Down* (9137) 9.30 *Count Down* (9137) 10.00 *Count Down* (9137) 10.30 *Count Down* (9137) 11.00 *Count Down* (9137) 11.30 *Count Down* (9137) 12.00 *Count Down* (9137) 12.30 *Count Down* (9137) 1.00 *Count Down* (9137) 1.30 *Count Down* (9137) 2.00 *Count Down* (9137) 2.30 *Count Down* (9137) 3.00 *Count Down* (9137) 3.30 *Count Down* (9137) 4.00 *Count Down* (9137) 4.30 *Count Down* (9137) 5.00 *Count Down* (9137) 5.30 *Count Down* (9137) 6.00 *Count Down* (9137) 6.30 *Count Down* (9137) 7.00 *Count Down* (9137) 7.30 *Count Down* (9137) 8.00 *Count Down* (9137) 8.30 *Count Down* (9137) 9.00 *Count Down* (9137) 9.30 *Count Down* (9137) 10.00 *Count Down* (9137) 10.30 *Count Down* (9137) 11.00 *Count Down* (9137) 11.30 *Count Down* (9137) 12.00 *Count Down* (9137) 12.30 *Count Down* (9137) 1.00 *Count Down* (9137) 1.30 *Count Down* (9137) 2.00 *Count Down* (9137) 2.30 *Count Down* (9137) 3.00 *Count Down* (9137) 3.30 *Count Down* (9137) 4.00 *Count Down* (9137) 4.30 *Count Down* (9137) 5.00 *Count Down* (9137) 5.30 *Count Down* (9137) 6.00 *Count Down* (9137) 6.30 *Count Down* (9137) 7.00 *Count Down* (9137) 7.30 *Count Down* (9137) 8.00 *Count Down* (9137) 8.30 *Count Down* (9137) 9.00 *Count Down* (9137) 9.30 *Count Down* (9137) 10.00 *Count Down* (9137) 10.30 *Count Down* (9137) 11.00 *Count Down* (9137) 11.30 *Count Down* (9137) 12.00 *Count Down* (9137) 12.30 *Count Down* (9137) 1.00 *Count Down* (9137) 1.30 *Count Down* (9137) 2.00 *Count Down* (9137) 2.30 *Count Down* (9137) 3.00 *Count Down* (9137) 3.30 *Count Down* (9137) 4.00 *Count Down* (9137) 4.30 *Count Down* (9137) 5.00 *Count Down* (9137) 5.30 *Count Down* (9137) 6.00 *Count Down* (9137) 6.30 *Count Down* (9137) 7.00 *Count Down* (9137) 7.30 *Count Down* (9137) 8.00 *Count Down* (9137) 8.30 *Count Down* (9137) 9.00 *Count Down* (9137) 9.30 *Count Down* (9137) 10.00 *Count Down* (9137) 10.30 *Count Down* (9137) 11.00 *Count Down* (9137) 11.30 *Count Down* (9137) 12.00 *Count Down* (9137) 12.30 *Count Down* (9137) 1.00 *Count Down* (9137) 1.30 *Count Down* (9137) 2.00 *Count Down* (9137) 2.30 *Count Down* (9137) 3.00 *Count Down* (9137) 3.30 *Count Down* (9137) 4.00 *Count Down* (9137) 4.30 *Count Down* (9137) 5.00 *Count Down* (9137) 5.30 *Count Down* (9137) 6.00 *Count Down* (9137) 6.30 *Count Down* (9137) 7.00 *Count Down* (9137) 7.30 *Count Down* (9137) 8.00 *Count Down* (9137) 8.30 *Count Down* (9137) 9.00 *Count Down* (9137) 9.30 *Count Down* (9137) 10.00 *Count Down* (9137) 10.30 *Count Down* (9137) 11.00 *Count Down* (9137) 11.30 *Count Down* (9137) 12.00 *Count Down* (9137) 12.30 *Count Down* (9137) 1.00 *Count Down* (9137) 1.30 *Count Down* (9137) 2.00 *Count Down* (9137) 2.30 *Count Down* (9137) 3.00 *Count Down* (9137) 3.30 *Count Down* (9137) 4.00 *Count Down* (9137) 4.30 *Count Down* (9137) 5.00 *Count Down* (9137) 5.30 *Count Down* (9137) 6.00 *Count Down* (9137) 6.30 *Count Down* (9137) 7.00 *Count Down* (9137) 7.30 *Count Down* (9137) 8.00 *Count Down* (9137) 8.30 *Count Down* (9137) 9.00 *Count Down* (9137) 9.30 *Count Down* (

